

Oklahoma City, OK



Oklahoma homeowners add Hawaiian-themed entertainment retreat to their 30-acre property

Background

The backyard party is an American tradition, filled with friends, food and good music.

The owners of this Oklahoma City estate have transformed the traditional backyard party into a star-studded extravaganza, packed with hundreds of friends, a Hawaiian luau and a Beatles tribute band on their private stage. Crestron control helped make this entertainment retreat possible.

“The homeowners are serious about their parties,” says Joey Rosario, president of audio/video contractor Voyager Home Systems, Inc. of Edmond, OK. This backyard includes a small lake, 10 acres of woods, a high-end sound system, a thatched-roofed Polynesian pavilion called a palapa, and an extensive outdoor lighting system that can subtly shift colors to set the mood or pulse in rhythm to the band.

The homeowners came back from a tropical vacation last spring with a question: “What would it take to make the wooded section of our property into a lakeside tropical retreat?” They worked with local contractors and landscapers to build the 30-foot diameter palapa, a separate restroom structure, a plank walkway through the woods complete with tiki figures and a beach with several tons of white sand. They asked Rosario to handle the sound, lighting and video systems.

“It’s definitely a Garden of Eden,” says Rosario. “The landscaping is gorgeous and we approached the sound system in the same way we would for a commercial theater.” Rosario also brought in commercial lighting contractor Andy Burns of Triple C Lighting Specialists of Oklahoma City. “Andy did a phenomenal job lighting the trees and the palapa,” Rosario says. “And he did it very green, using energy efficient LED fixtures coupled with the latest control and dimming technology.”



“ The Crestron system is pure convenience, giving the homeowners complete control of the lighting from anywhere.” **Andy Burns**, Commercial Lighting Contractor, Triple C Lighting Specialists

Lighting the retreat

Burns says one of his goals was to build a lighting system that was dramatic, flexible and energy-efficient yet did not detract from the daytime natural environment.

“Based on the quantity of fixtures required and the amount of distance covered between them, Joey and I decided that the energy consumption of typical mercury vapor fixtures would be too high.” Instead, Burns suggested high-performance LED fixtures. He used a total of 75, ranging from white 8-watt lamps mounted in the palapa and the bathroom roof centers to 22-watt floods for the majority of the trees and for uplighting the palapa roof. Lastly, he used large, 44-watt fixtures to uplight the more sizable trees on the property.

To control and automate these fixtures, Burns and Rosario used commercial-grade control processors and dimming systems from Crestron. The Crestron system provides a very simple way for the homeowners to choose and schedule lighting effects that Burns designed and Rosario programmed into the system. A twelve-inch Crestron touch screen puts all of the controls at their fingertips, as does the Crestron Mobile Pro® control app installed on the homeowner’s iPad® and iPhone®.

“The Crestron system is pure convenience, giving the homeowners complete control of the lighting from anywhere,” he notes. “It also saves energy by ensuring that the lights are on only when needed and that each fixture is dimmed to provide the ideal effect, which is normally below its maximum.”

There’s a rule of thumb that suggests that automated controls will save about 10% of the energy used by any lighting system, but Burns says that the savings are much higher in this case.

“Not only do these lamps provide significant energy savings, but they last six to ten times longer, so there’s very little maintenance required,” adds Burns.

Once Burns specified where the fixtures would go, the general contractor installed concrete pillars to hold them, to make sure they stayed dry given water level fluctuations around the lake. Star Enterprise Electric of Edmond, OK installed the conduits and wiring.

One of the lighting systems’ most dramatic features is its ability to change the look and the mood of the night-time lakeside scene to match what the homeowner’s desire for a particular evening. Burns designed eight pre-set scenes that can include multiple colors or slow transitions over any time period desired. “For example, an area could start out as green and turn to midnight blue over an hour’s time,” Burns explains. “That shifts the atmosphere, even though it happens so slowly people don’t notice it changing.”

Although the custom LED fixtures and Crestron control system costs more than a traditional system, “the homeowners decided to spend more up front when they saw how much they would save on energy and maintenance costs, and what great effects they would get from the ability to change color,” Burns says.



Rock and roll

While the lighting effects are dramatic, the property sound and video systems are no less so. “We decided to use commercial amplifiers and speakers, and they sound phenomenal,” Rosario says.

A nice benefit of owning 30 acres of wooded land is that there’s not much worry about disturbing the neighbors. These homeowners can crank the sound up as loud as they want, and they do. Voyager installed two power amplifiers, for a combined 2,200 watts RMS (at 8 ohms) going to four loudspeakers in the palapa and two more outdoors. There’s an additional amplifier powering a subwoofer, which, together with the loudspeakers, literally makes the thatch-roofed structure shake.

“We set this up so a band or DJ can just plug into the sound system,” Rosario says. “The homeowners hosted four parties last summer with live bands, several more with a DJ, plus a wedding reception.”

The homeowners are big sports fans as well, so Voyager installed a high-definition projection system with an eight-foot wide screen in the palapa plus three more 42” LED displays. They can monitor four games at once, switching back and forth to the main screen, and after the game switch to karaoke, with the singer projected on the big screen via an IP camera mounted on the wall. The video system is ideal for

musical events. DJs can hook up their laptops to play video clips along with music, and for a larger party, the homeowners can tie a camera or two into the video system so guests can see close-ups of the band on the multiple screens.

If the family wants to enjoy a quieter evening, Voyager installed a Blu-ray Disc® player and a DVR for movies and television.

The same Crestron touch screen and iPad and iPhone apps that control the lighting system give the homeowners (or a DJ) fingertip control of the sound and lighting systems. A rugged Crestron handheld remote control also provides very simple control of the video system, including channel selection, play, pause, forward and reverse for the Blu-ray and DVR, plus volume control and dimming of the lights in the palapa.

“The Crestron system really was the key to making this all work,” Rosario says. “It would be far too much trouble to control all these systems manually and more expensive, too, when you consider the amount of energy that would be wasted by leaving systems on when they’re not needed. We know that these systems are extremely reliable, and that’s crucial as well. These homeowners know that, when they’re ready to party, their lighting, sound and video systems will be ready as well, month after month and year after year, even though they’re installed outdoors.”

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