

Entertaining in Scottsdale

Peoria, Arizona

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Scottsdale-area residence built for entertaining

How do you design an AV system for a homeowner who loves sports, loves to entertain and loves television and video?

If you're Doug Greenwald, partner at Scottsdale, Arizona-based Creative Sound and Integration, you'll probably use a lot of TVs, you'll probably include high-end video and audio distribution, and you'll certainly want to choose your control systems carefully, tailoring the panel or remote to the homeowner's needs on a room by room basis.

Greenwald uses Crestron because of overall reliability, the ease in which various products integrate, and the responsiveness Crestron has shown its dealers.

Greenwald recently completed a 13,000 square foot home in nearby Peoria, Arizona, which includes a 5,500 square foot guest house plus outdoor video and audio zones and a roofed pool ramada – where he ended up installing 23 42 - 50" flat-screen TVs, a full-scale home theater, centralized video and audio server and a Crestron home automation system.

A video playground

A striking feature of this home is the sheer number of audio and video zones. Because much of the entertainment centers on televised sports, two areas –the bar/game room and the pool ramada– each include four flat-panel displays so guests can



view up to four sports programs simultaneously. Creative Sound connected five cable boxes into the video distribution system: four to serve these party areas, the fifth available to view different programming in a separate part of the house.

In addition, they installed four Blu-ray players and a media server, which is able to store hundreds of high-definition movies and thousands of audio CDs; a Crestron IDOC interface for an iPod®, and two Crestron SIRIUS® satellite radio receivers. T1500. They tied these sources into Crestron CNX-BIPAD8 audio and CNX-PVID8 video processors, which distribute 24 zones of audio and 24 zones of video throughout the house on Cat5e cable.

The extravagant home also boasts a 15-seat home theater with 119" diagonal screen, high-definition projector with long-throw lens, and Dolby 7.1 surround.

Creative Sound carefully tailored the Crestron control panels to the needs of family members and the requirements of each room.

The kitchen serves as the home's command center, using a 12" Crestron TPS-12LB wall-mounted touchpanel to control all audio, video, lighting, pool and security systems. "We used a large, wall-mounted panel here to simplify setup and operations, explains Greenwald. The larger the screen, the more we can fit on each page, and that means fewer page flips to find the controls you need."



Inside the main entrance to the house is a TPS-6LA 5.7" wall-mounted touch panel, which duplicates the command center's functions in a smaller, more discreet form. This panel works well here because it allows full control but takes up little wall space.

In the family room and home theater, Creative Sound used TPS-6X 5.7" wireless handheld touchpanels. "This panel gives us reliable two-way communications and enough real estate to control the video sources, iPod, and Sirius radio, as well as the thermostats, pool and lighting," he explains. In the adult game room TPMC-8X wireless 8" touchpanel, was used. "We wanted a larger screen in here to more easily control the sources for the four TVs, as well as the other functions. This is also a two-way panel, which means that each device confirms that it has received each command, and that we're able to display metadata such as album, song and artist information from the iPod, SIRIUS XM, FM radio and media server systems."

"For the kids' game room, we wanted a smaller, simpler remote, so we used a TPMC-4X with its 3.5" touchscreen. It's great for channel surfing yet has enough power to control the video and audio and switch between TV and the Wii, Xbox and PlayStation2. TPMC-4X handhelds were also installed in the office, master suite, master sitting room, pool ramada, and guest living room. In each, it's used to control a single flat panel display, audio and video sources, temperature and lighting.

Poolside a waterproof WPR-48 handheld remote, allows someone sitting in the spa or pool to control audio sources without fear of accidentally damaging it.

For the master patio, master bath, main covered patio, and laundry room, Greenwald specified a one-way ML-600 handheld remote. "For these rooms we didn't need to show much information. We simply wanted a control for the audio and a television."

The house includes 12 climate-controlled garage spaces. Creative Sound installed seven APAD wall-mount LCD panels, mainly to control background music. Like other rooms on the property, the garage spaces include Crestron thermostats – there are 17 total in the home. "In the Phoenix area we're mostly concerned with air conditioning," says Greenwald. The large number of thermostats gives the homeowner, his family and guests the flexibility to choose the temperature they prefer in each area of the house.

There's also a larger garage space for the family's RV, with music controlled by a wall-mounted 12-button C2N-DB12A keypad. The same controller was used for the dining room as well.

Rounding out the control systems, Crestron XPanel e-control, allows the homeowner and Creative Sound to access the home automation system from any computer with Internet access. "Not only can the homeowner check on and control his system from off-site, but we have access to do upgrades and make changes from our office."



Reliability the key

This accessibility is very helpful to Greenwald, given the premium he puts on reliable, easy-to-service systems. "Product reliability is very important to us," he explains. "One reason is that we have to warranty our work, and it costs us money if something doesn't work properly. The main reason, however, is that our reputation is everything for us. Our main source of revenue is customer referrals. If the systems don't work reliably, that's a big problem."

Greenwald uses Crestron because of their overall reliability, the ease in which the various products integrate, and the responsiveness Crestron has shown its dealers. "For example, we included a pool interface in this home's control system. Our touchpanels control water temperature, lighting, and fountain and waterfall effects in the pool and spa through an RS-232 interface." There have been some problems in Arizona with lightening strikes, which can damage the pool's electronics and the control system. When Greenwald brought up the issue with Crestron, they responded by adding surge protection for their RS232 interface.

"Let's be honest," he adds. "Our customers just care that their system works and is very user friendly. That depends on how we design the system and how we program it. But the equipment we use must be extremely reliable. The fewer times our service people have to go out, the happier our customer is going to be."

"Our goal has been to be the leader in home automation in this area, and we have been successful enough so far to become the largest Crestron home automation dealer in Arizona."