

Main Line Mansion

CASE STUDY | RESIDENTIAL

BRYN MAWR, PA

Challenge

Design a sophisticated home automation system for clients who are loyal fans of Apple® products

Solution

Crestron DigitalMedia™ and Crestron control technology using the Crestron app for the iPad®



Apple lovers choose Crestron for award-winning home

“Crestron products work flawlessly with the iPad and all the Apple technology the family loves, and delivery times, support, and any necessary service would be vastly superior with Crestron.”

— Jason Hendrie

Creative Systems USA

Remodeled home in Pennsylvania uses iPad interface from Crestron for HVAC, security, lighting, shading, and AV controls

Sometimes you have to take a long and frustrating detour to arrive at a great destination.

That was the case for Jason Hendrie, Managing Partner at Creative Systems USA of King of Prussia, PA, while working with a new client last year. He recommended using Crestron technology for a very large and sophisticated home automation system, but the client thought he knew better. “Please use this other system,” the client had said. “I’ve heard it’s the best for Apple users.”

The owner of this Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania mansion purchased the early 20th Century home and quickly started a remodel to add modern technologies. “It was an opportunity to build a really great automation system, working from the ground up in a beautiful home,” Hendrie explains.

The clients had a number of requests. They are art collectors, so they needed the automation system to control a commercial-grade heating and cooling system that would keep the temperature and humidity constant throughout the 15,000 square foot home.



The homeowner also desired a convenient whole house audio and video distribution solution to access television shows, movies, and an extensive music collection from anywhere in the house. Additionally, they needed an intuitive interface for the complex lighting and motorized shading system, which was designed to highlight the artwork, as well as provide greater home security.

But the most important feature to the family was that all this technology be controllable from their favorite personal devices, the iPad and iPhone®. “All the members of this family are heavy Apple users,” says Hendrie. “If they download music or movies, it’s from iTunes®. If they stream a television show, they use Apple TV®. As we learned more about the requirements of the system, and as the homeowners grew more comfortable with us, we knew we would have to sit down with them and talk about the differences between Crestron and this other vendor.”

Hendrie’s concerns

Hendrie had five concerns with the solution the client requested. “The first was simply that it is a closed system. The company decides which components they will interface with. If you need to control something different, you have to ask them to create the needed modules, and you have to wait.” Crestron, on the other hand, is very open to customization by integrators. “If the device has any kind of control port, you can normally tie it in,” Hendrie explains.

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The ability to custom-program the automation system was of particular concern with the heating and air conditioning. “This was going to be a commercial-quality HVAC system using BACnet™ protocols for the control interface,” Hendrie explains. “We were not sure the other company was going to be able to handle it, whereas Crestron already had BACnet protocols built into their MC3 control systems.”

Hendrie was also concerned about how easy the other system was going to be to set up. “For us, Crestron actually is the simpler solution,” he says. “The other product is supposed to be faster and easier to work with, but in practice we have found Crestron programming is much more straightforward.”



Setting up the home audio and video distribution systems would also be easier with Crestron. Creative Systems used Crestron DigitalMedia™ high-definition video networking and switching technology throughout the home, as well as Crestron Cat5 audio distribution technology. The other system did not offer a distribution solution with comparable performance or flexibility.

"The biggest reason for us, and the one that won the homeowner over in the end, was the level of support we receive from Crestron. First, I explained that Crestron products work flawlessly with the iPad and all the Apple technology the family loves. Then I explained that the delivery times, support, and any necessary service would be vastly superior with Crestron. We were simply not going to be able to support the homeowner in the way they wanted us to without the Crestron team behind us. The clients understood all the benefits and agreed Crestron was the best solution for their new home."

The finished result

The remodeled home is truly stunning. While the architects and contractors carefully restored the home's traditional Main Line stone exterior, they created bright contemporary interiors that complement the family's beautiful painting and sculpture collection.

To keep energy costs to a minimum, the contractors used a geothermal heating and cooling system, using the constant 50-degree temperature of the ground

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beneath the home to help preheat outside air in the winter and cool it in the summer. The new Crestron technology controls this system (which includes 18 zones of forced air and 11 radiant heat zones) and allows the family to monitor its performance on any of their iPads.

The Creative Systems team tied the security system into the Crestron controls as well, allowing family members to arm or disarm the system from the iPhone as they leave or return home. The family can also check the security system's status from anywhere in the world (with an Internet connection). Creative Systems created



simplified lighting controls so when the family members select a room or series of rooms on the onscreen floor plan, they can choose a lighting/shading scene to create the right effect for reading, working, watching TV, or entertaining.

Creative Systems installed a 21-zone audio system which allows family members to choose their own music for any area inside or outside the home. They also installed a seven-zone distributed video system with flat panel TVs in the family room, second-floor common area, master bedroom, office, kitchen, guest room, and basement media room.

While homes of this size and caliber normally include a number of dedicated Crestron touch screens, Creative Systems deployed eight dedicated iPads instead. Numerous iPads are mounted in Crestron in-wall docking stations and others are placed on tabletop stands. Each room with a TV includes a Crestron handheld remote that can change channels, select video sources, control volume, and allow users to adjust the lights, shades, and temperature.

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Integrator
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