
INTENSIFY

Winter 09

**The art of
integration &
technology**



Good design and
'smart' homes

New C-Bus Wiser Controller • Watching your environmental footprint • Fantastic integrated homes

Contents

“Energy consumption can be reduced... by simply applying more efficient architectural designs”



How often do you hear something that at the time seems profound, but when you walk away and ponder on it you come to the realisation that this ground-breaking revelation had been staring you right in the face all along? Well, that’s how I feel about the whole energy management topic and the need for more efficient homes.

Many of us today have an underlying drive to have more ‘things’ than the generation that went before us. ‘Bigger and better’ seems to sum up our lives, from our homes to the devices we fill them with.

The challenge is that all of this requires increasing amounts of energy. It’s the electricity to run it, heat it, cool it, light it, and the manufacturing process to build it, that means human beings are consuming energy and creating greenhouse gases like never before.

A recent statistic stated that by 2050 we will require double, YES DOUBLE the energy, and yet global targets are for half the current greenhouse gasses. How can we ever achieve this?

I am constantly asked for my opinion on this topic, and I sometimes struggle to curb my personal views and frustrations. The bottom line is this: you can’t force people to use less energy; it just doesn’t work. I often throw academics and environmentalists into tailspins at public forums by asking the audience: “If you have \$15,000 to spend; what would you rather buy – a home cinema system, or solar panels?” Each time, I find that the majority still prefer the home cinema option.

So how do we combat this? Simple; allow people to achieve more while using less of our common planet. In fact, that’s the mission statement of Clipsal’s mother company, Schneider Electric. We have to become more coherent in the way we design homes, and in fact, the way we design everything that goes into them. It’s a cliché, but the only way we will achieve these challenging targets is by allowing occupants to have their cake and eat it too. Allow home-owners to have a large flat panel TV and surround sound system, but integrate them into the home in a way that maximises efficiency to more than compensate for it. Energy consumption can be reduced by using home automation to ensure lights and devices turn off automatically when not required, and by simply applying more efficient architectural designs that maximise natural lighting, air flow, and heating from the sun in winter.

It’s not rocket science. It may sound revolutionary, but the solution has been there all along, staring us right in the face.

In this edition of Intensify, we’ll cover this topic in detail, and throw one extra aspect into the mix... the need for technology to be simple, intuitive and user friendly at the same time.

Regards,
Simon Wehr
Marketing Manager – Residential
Clipsal



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The **sweet life**

ARCHITECT [STEPHEN JOLSON](#) COMBINES PRACTICE WITH PLEASURE IN HIS OWN HOME AND STUDIO TUCKED WITHIN THE DECAYING FAÇADE OF A 1950s LOLLY FACTORY.

A three-year project has come to fruition for Melbourne architect Stephen Jolson with the completion of his combined studio and residence in Greville Street, Prahran. Built within the shell of the old Sunrise Confectioner's factory, this urban oasis has a hierarchy of spaces clearly dividing the office on the ground floor and his family's home on the two upper levels.

The two-storey residence responds effortlessly to the needs of a young, professional, growing family – Stephen, his wife Lisa who is a cardiologist at nearby Alfred Hospital, and four-year-old son Luca – and is reached via a floating, back-lit steel ribbon staircase which becomes the transition between the derelict factory façade and the refined interior.

On the first floor, three large rectangular blocks inserted into the space contain and conceal the functional aspects for living to divide each zone: kitchen, living and dining as well as playroom, laundry and powder room. The kitchen is fully integrated into the living space and is defined by a six-metre monolithic block of polished stone, the surface having been selected to maximise reflection of surrounding flat surfaces and mirror the history of the building. The extensive joinery is in American Oak and discreetly conceals ample storage, ovens and refrigerator. On the rear wall, a black and white image depicting the sugar vats that were formerly used to make hundreds and

thousands has been enlarged to reflect the history of the building's former life. This image slides aside to reveal the kitchen and additional storage and utility areas.

The informal living and dining areas overlook a large, north-facing private garden with a steel bonfire and water features. City views are framed by the original factory windows, now glass-free. The lawned area creates a thermal buffer to the ground floor office, retaining heat in winter and insulating the interior from summer heat.

The upper floor contains the main bedroom with en suite bathroom and walk-in robe, two children's bedrooms, a main bathroom, storeroom and gym.

On the ground floor is the architectural studio employing 15 staff. The planning of this space is open throughout to encourage communication and discussion between all staff members. A central pod contains a modular system where all workstations can shift to accommodate a number of variations that may be required, including quantity of workstations and size of layout space. The original concrete slab floor has been retained and polished, while horizontal steel and joinery elements provide discreet display and storage solutions.

Though the residence features all the high tech aspects of contemporary life, including C-Bus automation systems, very little of it is visibly apparent. From the Miele kitchen appliances to the plasma television screen



“Technology is hidden from view, and only revealed when in use.”



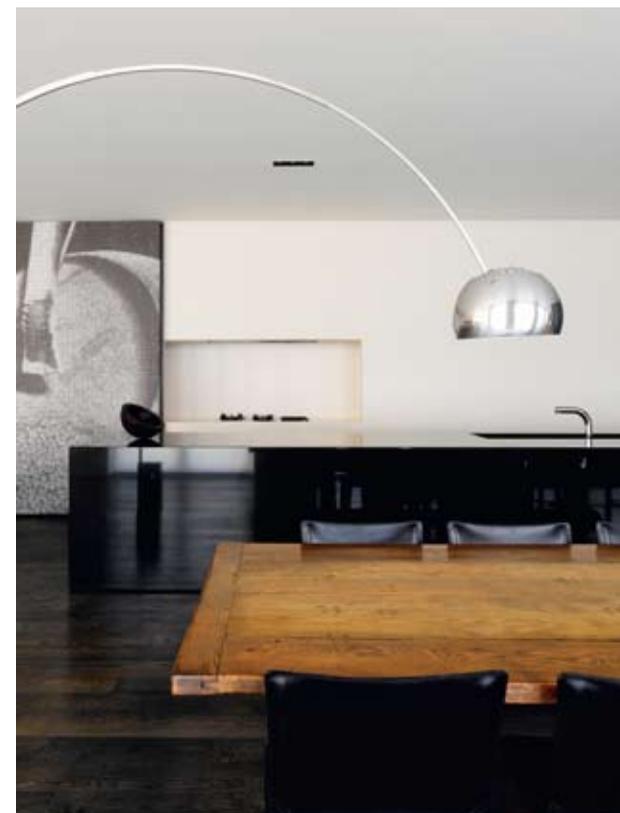
and speakers in the living area, technology is hidden from view and only revealed when in use.

"Our office specialises in high-end residential projects," says Jolson. "Our work is about concealing and revealing function. We use technology as much as possible to assist in the whole design process. Aesthetics are of course very important, but also performance and functionality. It's a matter of balancing those items. When it came to installing C-Bus in our own home, the most important aspect for us was simplicity. Urban Intelligence [C-Bus pointOne member] went through all the hardware available and selected a system that worked for us. We've been collaborating on projects with them for the past eight years and it's good to work with a company that understands the boundaries of these things – often clients don't understand what they really need until they move in."

For Jolson, the beauty of C-Bus is that it allows control of the environment within and outside of the home. "We love the flexibility of being able to control the lighting without being locked into a lighting plan. We also do a lot of entertaining and can control the theme of the house depending on the time of day."

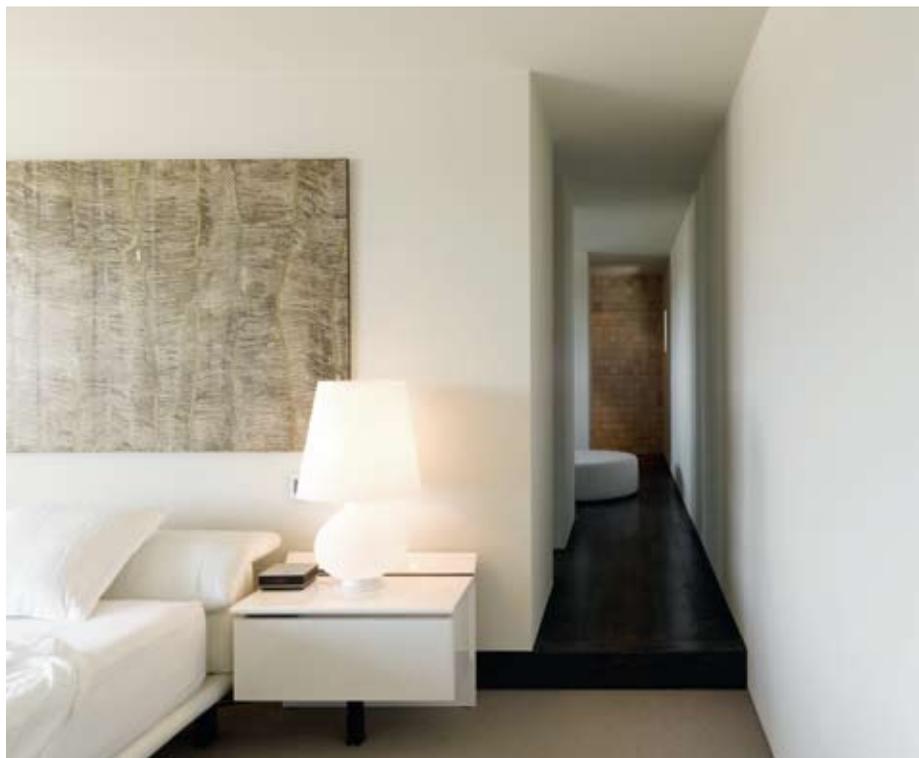
A single touch screen controls the whole house – from lighting and blinds to switching on the bonfire and water features in the garden when guests arrive.

For C-Bus pointOne member Lior Rauchberger, Design Director of Urban Intelligence, a key part of the installation was the security system, which uses biometric technology to recognise fingerprints. "One finger print reader concealed at the street entrance identifies people entering as being either studio/office staff or private family members," says Rauchberger. "Depending on



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who swipes their finger, either doors leading to the office or the doors leading to the private residence will open. Stephen needs entry to both so he uses his index finger to access the office and his middle finger to go upstairs. This technology has matured significantly over the past two years and is now being implemented in many properties with excellent results.”

A touch screen in a wall recess in the living area showing a floor plan controls the whole C-Bus system. “The Jolsons can control the lighting, see the security cameras, hit the entertaining button to open the blinds, turn on LED stairway lights and lamps and switch on the audio system,” says Rauchberger.

Throughout the residence, black DLT glass switches from the Saturn range by Clipsal, feature eight different buttons with electronic labels indicating blinds, lighting and other integrated systems.

For Rauchberger, the entertainment system was an especially innovative part of the project. “In the living area there’s no sign of audio-visual hardware. The Pioneer plasma screen is installed using a descender and comes down in front of the firewood

storage area when needed. The latest Philips Pronto universal remote runs all the audio visual systems. For the surround sound, we used Stealth Acoustic speakers which have been installed in the ceiling and wall cavities and painted over so they are completely invisible. A media server stores a large music collection, which can be searched and played using the Pronto remote.”

“We wouldn’t have had a home theatre at all if it was visible,” says Jolson. “We’d rather live with the home theatre, not have it live with us.”

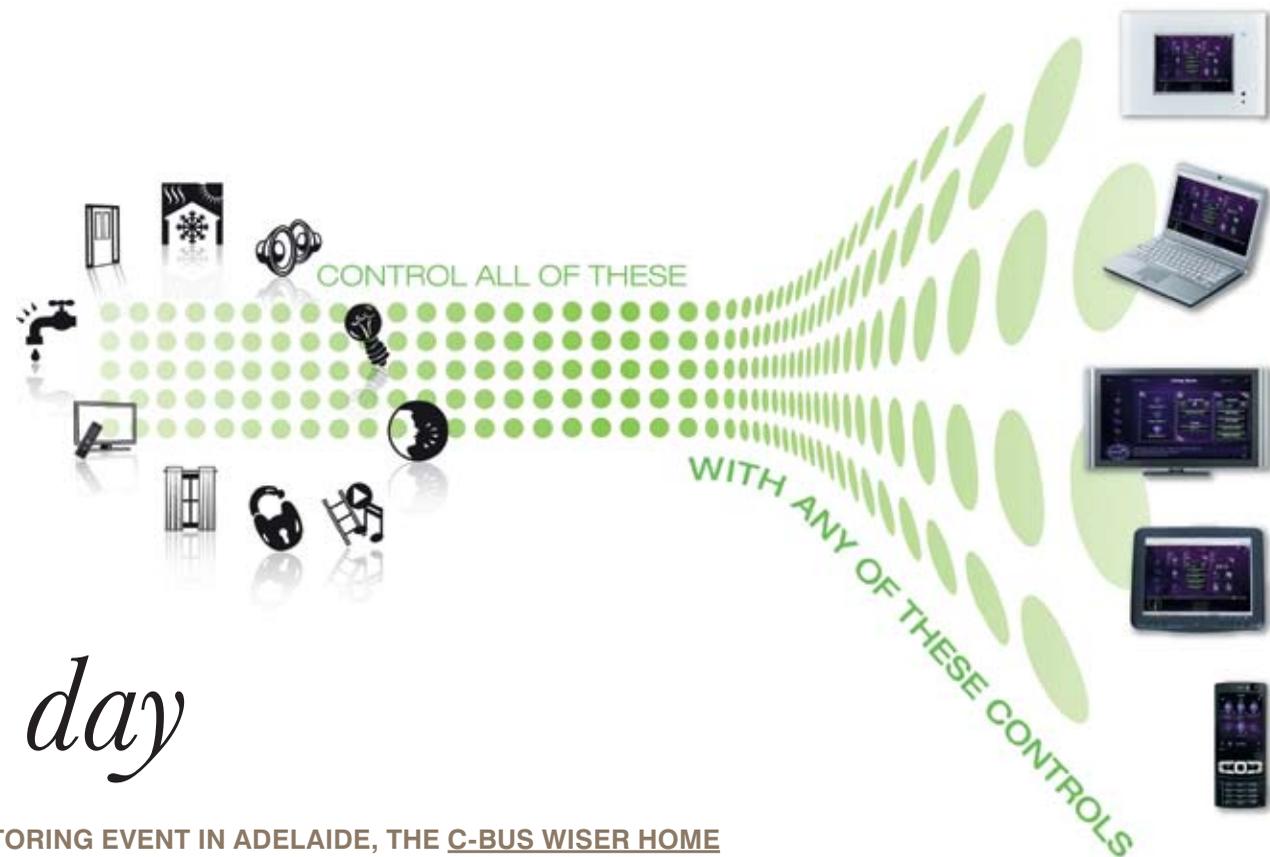
“We call ourselves technology architects,” adds Rauchberger. “For this project we went through a significant design phase with the client over multiple meetings and developed up to six versions of the technology brief. The outcome has been very successful.”

The added bonus for Jolson is that there’s no longer any need to take clients to a showroom to show them the benefits of C-Bus home automation. “Now I’m constantly taking potential clients upstairs and can easily show them how one button can control the whole theme of the house, depending on the time of day.” @



Architect / Stephen Jolson
C-Bus pointOne Member / Urban Intelligence
Builder / Len Bogatin & Associates

Wiser *by the day*



LAUNCHED AT THIS YEAR'S CLIPSAL 500 MOTORING EVENT IN ADELAIDE, THE **C-BUS WISER HOME CONTROLLER** BY CLIPSAL REVOLUTIONISES HOME AUTOMATION – MAKING IT SIMPLER, MORE STREAMLINED AND MORE ACCESSIBLE.

Thanks to Clipsal Integrated Systems, homes are not only getting smarter, they are now also getting wiser. The new C-Bus Wiser is the missing piece of the smart home puzzle, bringing electrical, multimedia and telecommunications technology together in a single solution that is supremely user-friendly.

The exciting new product was launched officially at the Full Throttle event at this year's Clipsal 500, Australia's largest domestic motorsport event, held annually in Adelaide. Full Throttle was a business session held at the National Wine Centre in Adelaide on 20 March, running across a morning and afternoon session with 1000 attendees each – Clipsal customers such as electrical contractors, wholesalers, builders, architects, consultants and developers as well as VIP guests including members of parliament. At the event, the new C-Bus Wiser was demonstrated and explained to guests who embraced the new system for its obvious benefits and appeal.

C-Bus Wiser brings a whole new level of functionality and connectivity to the home. The Wiser Home Controller connects many different technologies such as lighting control, security, air-conditioning, audio-visual equipment, media players, irrigation systems, motorised blinds and curtains and a whole lot more, providing a seamless solution.

Gone are the many different controllers and remotes needed in the past. With Wiser, the homeowner can operate nearly anything from almost anywhere: touch screens, wall switches, web tablets, remote controls, mobile phones, computers, even the television. It can also be operated from outside the home via the internet or mobile phone.

If you're outside cooking a barbeque and want to listen to some music, you can simply grab your mobile phone out of your pocket and turn on your multi-room audio system. Or maybe you are watching a movie and decide you're too cold. Pick up your remote control and adjust the temperature via a Microsoft Media Center menu on your



television screen. With Wiser, functions can be automated, according to your lifestyle and routine. You can be gently woken on weekdays by your bedside lamp lighting up and music fading in slowly, followed by curtains opening and your security alarm system deactivating from night mode. And when you leave for work, simply press the 'goodbye' button and your lights will turn off, blinds close, music fade and air conditioner power down.

Wiser allows the installer to make any adjustments and changes homeowners may want over the Internet – no more waiting around for a technician.

The homeowner can have Wiser set up to control motorised windows, blinds and curtains and allow them to respond automatically to changes in light, airflow and temperature; a video intercom system that shows visitors at the front door on the television screen; a media centre for storage and playback of digital information; multi-room audio; home security; lighting; air-conditioning; keyless entry and home theatre.

Wiser provides one intuitive control for everything, with the same look and feel on every device from a light switch, a touch screen, a home computer or digital TV. For example, lights are operated via a light bulb icon, sound systems by a speaker icon, and irrigation by a tap icon – straightforward and completely non-threatening to even the most techno-phobic of homeowners.

Simon Wehr, Clipsal Marketing Manager for the residential sector, says "Wiser is an affordable addition for anyone considering home automation. Whether at a simple entry-level system to a full-blown, high end system, Wiser offers a whole new level of convenience and functionality for any lifestyle. However, it is far more than just bringing out the best in your C-Bus system: with Wiser all your technology is easier to use, which means you'll use it more often and to do more things that make your home more functional and more finely attuned to your lifestyle needs." @

For more information visit clipsal.com/wiser.



Old world
values,
modern
comforts

CHOOSING TO BUILD A NEW HOME BASED ON A TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN AESTHETIC DOES NOT
MEAN ESCHEWING THE COMFORTS AND FUNCTIONALITY OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY.



“It looks like it came from the pages of a Grimm’s fairytale but features every modern comfort technology can provide...”

a respite from the daily grind, to be able to entertain both small and large groups, have plenty of room for staying guests and they were adamant that everything should be functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. The design process went into minute detail and the project kept evolving. They wanted the house to have a very European feel and to feel like it had been there a long time, so I incorporated a lot of ideas I had collected on travels to the UK and France, including little accents like half-round copper gutters that give the house a unique flair.”

Constructed using a conventional timber frame, the house features a range of natural materials, including five different types of stone, local limestone for fills and headers and stucco and crushed limestone for exterior finishes. Timbers, including Douglas Fir and Cedar, have also been used extensively. Inside, Hendel used old timber beams and reclaimed barn siding to give the house “a sense of establishment, as if it has been around for a while and will be around for a while”.

Hendel designed the house around a tower that lets in natural light from all sides. “The tower looks as if it has been sitting there for many years and someone built a new home around it,” says Hendel. “The clients requested a unique facade with tall, sweeping roof lines and the use of exterior materials and colours that blended with nature. Every square inch of the interior was meticulously planned for how the clients would use the home, with selections of materials that are durable, liveable and beautiful. The home features a stone arched entry leading to the Great Room, with a soaring nine metre vaulted ceiling framed with hand hewn, arched timber trusses. The Great Room also features an authentic wood-burning arched fireplace with an over-sized stone mantle.”

While traditional European manor houses were seriously lacking in the creature comforts we expect of modern homes, there’s no reason these days that a penchant for the past can’t be seamlessly combined with the latest in home technology. This impressive home nestled into a hill overlooking Christmas Lake in Minnesota in the US is a case in point. It looks like it came from the pages of a Grimm’s fairytale but features every modern comfort technology can provide – including a heated driveway to save on shovelling snow manually in the colder months.

Designed and built by Hendel Homes, a local company that specialises in creating high-end custom homes, the home covers 800 square metres over three levels, each with access to the outside and internal access via two staircases and an elevator. While the clients requested a building with the air of a castle, the interior layout had to meet the lifestyle requirements of a busy modern couple with two grown children. Rick Hendel of Hendel Homes says, “The clients wanted the house to have a resort feel and be



“The homeowner was particularly pleased that the Saturn keypads allowed the presence of the technology without clashing with the home’s old world feel.”



The kitchen features top of the range appliances, granite benchtops, a four metre island that can be used for serving large buffets and a servery to the outdoor entertaining area. At the far end of the house is a ‘tree’ room with 270 degree views of the lake and landscape, topped with a steeply vaulted timber ceiling with porthole windows. The master bathroom has views of the lake from a private balcony, a hand-painted barrel vault ceiling, chromatherapy shower and a whirlpool bath with a wrap-around bench in the centre. There’s even a high-tech Toto Neorest lavatory that is self-cleaning, has a heated seat and automatic lid and doubles as a bidet.

Behind stone arches on the lower level is an entertainment area complete with a theatre, fireplace and bar which took its aesthetic inspiration from traditional Irish pubs. “The theatre is connected to the bar area and is big enough to accommodate a large group for events such as watching the Superbowl,” says Hendel.

For the exterior, low-maintenance materials were selected with an authentic feel, including Da Vinci synthetic slate for the roof, copper gutters and downpipes and cast stone for window trim and detailing.

Many meetings were held prior to and during construction to select materials, finishes, fabrics and furnishings to create the desired feeling in each space. “These meetings included the placement of the clients’ original furnishings and fixtures as well as discussion of new furnishings,” recalls Rick Hendel. “Intricate interior details aren’t merely for show; they provide transitions and set the tone for each of the spaces throughout the home. No room is the same and there’s a surprise around every corner.”

Behind all the meticulous authentic detailing and craftsmanship in the home



lies its modern secret: Clipsal C-Bus systems, installed by Tony Peterson of Horizon Electric, that control lighting, heating, security, audio and audio-visual systems, power drapes and blinds, tied into a back up generator system in case of power outages. Throughout the home there are five discreetly placed Saturn DLT Mocha Colour keypads, four occupancy sensors, one Multisensor, nine thermostats and a Clipsal colour Touchscreen in the kitchen. “The homeowner was particularly pleased that the Saturn keypads allowed the presence of new technology without clashing with the home’s old world feel,” says Peterson.

“When setting up the house for entertaining, the homeowners simply go to the colour Touchscreen and from this point they can set up the whole house with interior and exterior lighting scenes, set their heating or cooling to a comfortable temperature and control the audio system which has zones of stereo speakers throughout the house,” explains Peterson. “The Touchscreen acts as a one-stop location for setting up entertainment concepts for the entire home.

“They also chose to integrate the lighting control system into a key chain controller which allows them the ability to activate an exterior and interior welcome home scene when they are driving up to the house. The home also features extensive use of occupancy sensors, including one located in the large walk-in pantry on the main level. The house is located on a lake and another way they use the occupancy sensors is on the lower level for people coming in from a swim in the lake who may have wet hands or may not be familiar with the lighting system. They can enter from the lower sliding door, walk into the sauna room and lower bathroom and the lights come on automatically for a set period of time.” @



Building designer and builder / Hendel Homes
Clipsal C-Bus Installer / Horizon Electric

Total control

MULTI AWARD-WINNING PERTH-BASED DESIGNER [Yael KURLANSKY](#) HAS AN ALL-EMBRACING RESIDENTIAL DESIGN PRACTICE THAT TAKES CARE OF EVERYTHING FROM THE BUILDING DESIGN TO THE SMALLEST INTERIOR DETAILS. FROM THEN ON, HER CLIENTS TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR HOMES VIA CUSTOMISED CONVERGENCE PRODUCTS INCLUDING C-BUS INTEGRATED HOME AUTOMATION SYSTEMS.

South African born and trained designer, Yael Kurlansky, arrived in Perth 20 years ago and set up her practice, Yael K Designs. Both a building designer and interior designer, Yael recalls that the budget for her first project in Australia was just \$42,000. "Since then we've won numerous state and national awards and most of the projects we do are \$2 million and upwards. It's been an enjoyable journey for me," says the busy designer who currently has nine projects in various stages of development and construction.

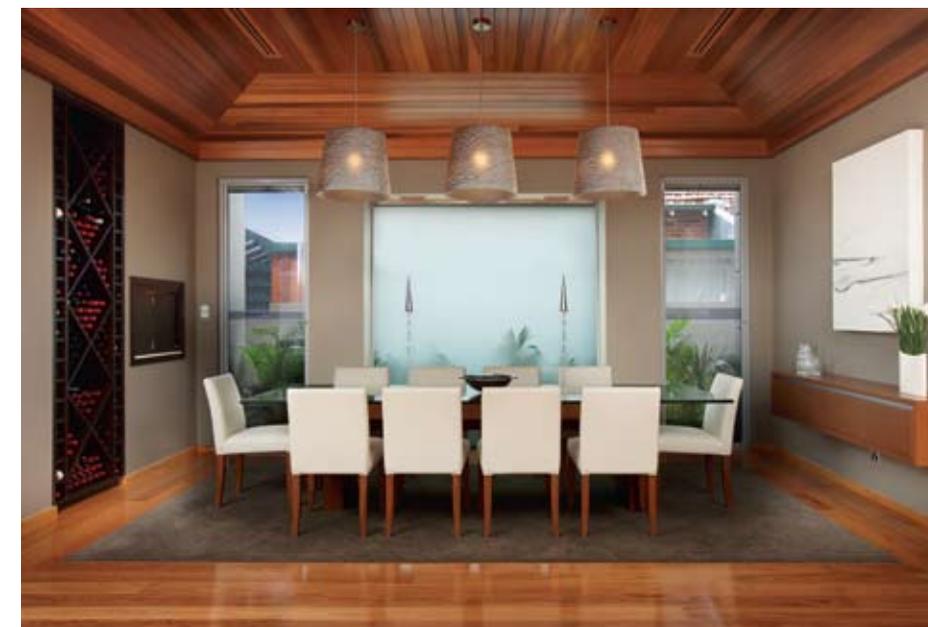
"Most jobs are a total concept," says Kurlansky, "from the building design down to the pots and pans and linen in some cases." This holistic approach is aided by husband Selwyn's business, Arq Furniture in Osborne Park, which custom designs and makes all the joinery, furnishings and soft furnishings for Yael K Designs' projects. Additionally, son Dean, who is the business manager of Arq Furniture, sources any artworks required. "The designers at Arq interpret my vision and handle everything," says Kurlansky. "They specialise in entertainment units which feature the correct dimensioning, interconnect cabling access and ventilation allowances needed for home theatre equipment."

For this house in Dalkeith, the clients' brief was for a large, resort style, sophisticated home that would incorporate facilities for two teenage children. "The clients knew my work and trusted me," says Kurlansky. "I emphasise function. Things





“...a strong emphasis on indoor and outdoor entertaining, as well as a very high level of detail of features and technology throughout.”



need to work. Spatial placement is absolutely vital, as are the proportion and position of rooms and the flow between spaces. With this project, there was also a strong emphasis on indoor and outdoor entertaining, as well as a very high level of detail of features and technology throughout.”

The home features a combined living and dining room with the kitchen slightly concealed behind a wine bar. In the dining area, an internal water wall cascades over a glazed panel into a pool of pebbles, giving the space a “groovy wine bar feel”. There’s also a dedicated home theatre, two bedrooms with en suite bathrooms, a guest suite, a gym and a master suite “as grand as the grandest hotel you could imagine” with a wet bar and access to a terrace.

Kurlansky describes the interior as “sumptuous and comfortable”. Increasing the comfort factor are details such as a recycling chute in the kitchen that leads straight to bins outside, a well-appointed barbecue area adjacent to the kitchen with access via a servery hatch, a solar heated pool and thoughtful zoning. The space is planned so that the clients’ teenage children have their own wing upstairs divided by a gallery from the master suite, while downstairs a guest bedroom is located with easy access to the home gym and private access to the garden. Then there is C-Bus home automation to keep the home humming smoothly.

“When we were well travelled through the conceptual stage we took the clients to

Intelligent Home who explained how the whole process and system works and what their options were. The clients decided to go for the top,” says Kurlansky. “The Clipsal C-Bus system is as user-friendly as you could ever imagine. If you’ve got the technology and take a bit of time setting it up to suit your personal lifestyle, you can live in the house without ever having to switch a light on or off. We work closely with Intelligent Home and the clients to achieve their needs and make it very easy for them. A C-Bus Colour Touchscreen with a customised user interface positioned in a central location operates all the lighting. One switch turns all the lights off when leaving the house, one sets the mood for everyday living, another for entertaining and there’s a goodnight switch. If anyone goes downstairs at night, night lights come on at dimmer level automatically. The front door can be operated from various areas within the house. The system is even used to network all computers in the house and control the underfloor heating in the wet areas.”

Clipsal C-Bus pointOne member, Alex Wetton of Intelligent Home, says “We installed structured cabling, smart wiring and Clipsal C-Bus automation throughout the house. We then integrate all these systems via a number of custom Colour Touchscreen screen devices which can be fixed in a wall or portable. A lot of effort went into the external lighting control to accent various aspects of the home design and individual feature plants. The C-Bus system also controls



the indoor waterfall lighting feature as well as outdoor water features, timers for pond pumps and UV filters. Many of these things happen automatically via C-Bus memory.

“The integrated remote control system by RTI allows user depth of control of all systems from one handset. They can control everything and even surf the net with one device. The remotes allow the user to control the C-Bus and associated products, the multi-room audio and various audio-visual components, as well as access the internet.”

Occupancy sensors in key locations such as the pantry, entry path and back garden turn on desired lighting circuits automatically when motion is detected. The C-Bus system also keeps track of date and time and is programmed so as to operate various lighting and other devices specific to the clients’ varying needs throughout the year and the seasons.

An Intellifone Intercom panel at the front gate allows communication from the gate to occupants of the home through the phone system. The gate is unlocked via keying a pre-determined series of numbers from a phone handset inside the house. The security system has been set up with pet-friendly sensors to allow pets to remain within the property while the alarm sensors are armed.

Not only is the technology up to the minute, it’s also thoughtfully designed. “The lovely Clipsal Saturn glass switch plates are just fantastic,” Kurlansky enthuses. @



Building designer/interior designer / Yael K Designs
 C-Bus pointOne Member / Intelligent Home
 Builder / Charles Allia Homes

“ If you’ve got the technology and take a bit of time setting it up to suit your personal lifestyle, you can live in the house without ever having to switch a light on or off. ”



Photography [Richard Birch](#)

This page:
Pictured from left, Greg Holman, Tony Camilleri and Jarek Alexander.

Living *on automatic*

INTENSIFY ASKED SOME OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING ARCHITECTS TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON HOW BETTER HOME DESIGN COMBINED WITH THE LATEST SMART HOME TECHNOLOGY CAN RESULT IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND GREATER COMFORT.

These days, we all know that any well-designed home should incorporate basic principles such as maximising efficiencies of natural light, ambient airflow and passive solar energy, not only to improve the comfort of the occupants but also to reduce the building's environmental impact, saving energy and costs in the long term. Once these basic design principles are in place, home technology such as C-Bus can be utilised to maximum effect to enable even more efficient use of energy in the home as well as 'fine-tuning' the home to the daily lifestyle of its occupants.

Multi award-winning Adelaide architect, Max Pritchard, has long been a proponent of sound sustainable design principles. He recently teamed up with Hickinbotham Group, one of South Australia's largest home builders, to produce an accessible series of standard houses combining the principles of energy-efficient, sustainable design in a range of affordable houses priced from as low as \$85,000.

For Pritchard, "Proper design principles have to be there first in order to get the maximum advantages from home technology. Then it can give you more control over

the moveable bits. Air-conditioning, for example, might be extravagant, but if you get the orientation right and the indoor/outdoor relationships right then it will be far less wasteful. Add automated timing so blinds come down at the right time of day, for example, and there are further energy savings to be had."

In a recent commercial project, the luxury Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island, Pritchard found that C-Bus automation systems allowed a significant reduction in energy use. "There's no mains power at the Lodge, so I worked with C-Bus pointOne installer, Michael Atkinson of The Butler Did It, to produce a foolproof system of not wasting power by reducing peak loads. For instance, the laundry, hot water and underfloor heating are all set so they do not all go on at the same time. Other programs are set to turn on and off as guests arrive and depart. Overall, we were able to reduce energy use by 20 per cent."

In Sydney, internationally renowned architectural practice Harry Seidler & Associates continues to design buildings to the exacting standards of the late Harry Seidler. "We think that more design focus



“The design has to be right first, then you can use home automation to tune living environments like the sails on a yacht...”

needs to be placed on the size and proportion of spaces in response to their use, situation and orientation,” says architect Greg Holman. “While good design of the fabric and construction of buildings is essential in achieving a comfortable living environment with a small carbon footprint, the proportions of spaces and the operation of openings has significant impact on the living environment. The mass market default of 2.4 to 2.7 metre ceilings misses important opportunities to achieve a more comfortable, responsive living environment. Likewise the act of punching a standard-size window unit in the middle of one wall ‘to see out of’ displays a lack of consideration for the many restrictions this imposes, as well as opportunities for a better outcome. Such lack of consideration at this stage of the process in realising a new home is something that the occupants will suffer for the life of the building.

“Cookie cutter project homes lose many of the advantages of having a C-Bus system. The design has to be right first, then you can use home automation to tune living environments like the sails on a yacht – in complete harmony with the prevailing conditions of the site. C-Bus offers wonderful



“The system provides the backbone for the owner to take intelligent control over routine behaviour.”

new opportunities but if we build dumb buildings we lose those opportunities. The market has to think design first – then C-Bus can sail the yacht for us.”

Jarek Alexander of Jahn Associates says, “Our work is mainly high-end residential and is characterised by very strong planning concepts with a strong link between external and internal living areas and a response to site and microclimate. We also place a strong emphasis on lighting concepts, using a number of different light sources as well as reflected and indirect light. Home automation provides the opportunity to preset those lights to create different moods and change them diurnally as well as seasonally.”

Alexander points out that the ability to change lighting patterns not only provides drama and theatre, but is also healthier for the occupants. “The eyes are very adaptable – that’s why people often get tired working in offices where the light is relatively uniform and has a sameness throughout the day. The eyes actually seek change and that’s what we provide in our houses.”

“These days everyone is inundated by technology but it can be hard to convince some clients to embrace technology in their home,” Alexander puzzles. “In 1923, Le Corbusier declared that ‘the home is a machine for living’. Home automation systems are at a successful level of technological development so we can achieve this now and integrate everything. Being user-friendly is now the key.”

Architect Tony Camilleri of Aesthetics Architecture encourages both his commercial and residential clients to incorporate C-Bus in their projects to at least a minimal level. “With C-Bus, users can electronically pre-programme the activation of lighting scenes, occupation conditions and mechanical systems which would otherwise require monotonous, repetitive manual activation,” says Camilleri. “Once you have gone through the initial process of thinking through your lifestyle habits and requirements and set the appropriate programming, the systems will all be automatically activated without you having to give it a second thought. It centrally controls all the systems for heating, cooling, lighting, security, irrigation etc so they run efficiently and in harmony with each other. I also use infrared sensors to activate and deactivate items such as lights in en suites and bathrooms and exhaust fans in toilets so they are switched on automatically when the spaces are occupied.”

“Many people who have incorporated C-Bus into their home don’t fully utilise its functionality. The system provides the backbone for the owner to take intelligent control over routine behaviour. It can be a huge component in making daily living more comfortable. C-Bus can also address the issue of energy useage and conservation. People often mean well but are not very responsible about energy on a daily basis. For example, children can be especially forgetful of switching off lights when they vacate a room. If you have an automated system it is all done for you. C-Bus is an inclusion that minimises energy consumption and costs without compromising on comfort or amenity.”

Architect Nicholas Bandounas of Fitzpatrick Partners bemoans the fact that “Many people are still scared of technology. We can see the enormous potential of the new C-Bus Wiser system in taking a house up to the next level of technology but the first step is to get the clients convinced and educate them on the advantages. We have C-Bus set up in our office to control the air-conditioning and lighting so we know from our own experience that it works really well.” @



Real estate and re-sale

IT’S FAIR TO SAY THAT MOST HOMEBUYERS ANTICIPATE MOVING TO A DIFFERENT HOUSE EVENTUALLY. BECAUSE OF THIS REALITY, A PROPERTY’S RE-SALE VALUE IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

While there are a number of given features that determine the re-sale value of a house, including location, aspect, size of the property and annual appreciation, there are also other dimensions of a home – particularly in the high-end market – that can affect the value when it is finally time to sell.

When the point is to build or renovate a house that will be capable of attracting a new owner in the future, knowing what these features are and how they will increase or decrease its marketability is crucial. Here are some things to think about when deciding which extra features to invest in.

Josip Jaksic from Jaksic Real Estate in Sydney says that potential buyers of mid to high-end properties expect all the modern conveniences when coming to buy. A single or double garage, a good aspect with district or water views, rooms with large proportions and beautifully finished details such as quality timber flooring and European appliances are some fundamental features. Easy access to the property and air-conditioning, particularly in west-facing houses, are also seen as paramount.

Not having these features can have a real affect on a home’s re-sale value. In turn there are also other, less quantifiable, features – ones that create an emotional connection between potential buyers and the home. Features that create a point of difference – such as a walk-in pantry in the kitchen, walk-in wardrobe connecting to a master ensuite or outdoor dining area – are highly desirable design elements in the current real estate market. Jaksic also reveals that a well-installed Clipsal C-Bus system, either in a new building or retro-fitted into an older house, is a definite advantage saying, “There’s a direction towards everything that is streamlined, understated and concealed. If you can walk into a room and press a few switches and it turns into an entertainment zone complete with ambient lighting, warmth and music but you can’t see any of the mechanisms that do it, who wouldn’t want that?”

Jennifer Aaron, from Jennifer Aaron Real Estate in Sydney adds that high-end home buyers expect “pretty much everything” in the homes they buy, from quality fixtures and fittings to under floor heating and air conditioning that is zoned to minimise energy wastage. The sustainable element is important – Jennifer adds that discerning buyers are now looking for eco-homes, homes that consciously manage their energy output. Having sold many homes with a C-Bus system installed, Aaron says “A fully C-Bus-ed house is really quite incredible. Today it still takes a discerning buyer to understand... In time, I think a lot more things that seem a luxury now will come to be necessities. C-Bus is one of those things. I’d love to have it in my own home.”

Lou Rendina from Rendina Real Estate in Melbourne, agrees saying “It’s funny, those who know about home automation more often than not refer to it as ‘C-Bus’ almost as a generic term, even if it is a competitor’s product. Many have heard of ‘smart homes’ or home automation, however the majority of people are still unaware of the benefits it offers.” But he adds that even for the unfamiliar buyer, a house with C-Bus will have something to offer that the house down the road doesn’t, and it all helps the potential buyer tick the boxes and make the offer. @

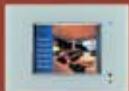
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