

Integrator's Family Home

CASE STUDY | RESIDENTIAL

MONMOUTH COUNTY, NJ

➔ Challenge

Provide easy-to-use technology in a family home also used as a showroom and product testing facility

➔ Solution

Install Crestron audio, video, lighting, network and control technology



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— **Todd Anthony Puma**

The Source Home Theater, Inc.

Keeping life simple

Ease of use the number one goal in residential contractor's own home

How simple is simple? If it passes the "three-year-old test," Todd Anthony Puma figures it's simple enough.

Puma is the owner and president of The Source Home Theater, Powered by Fregosa Design, a residential integration firm based in New York City. He says he has found that his clients are happiest if their systems are extremely easy to use. So whenever he and programmer Rich Fregosa develop a new customer interface, he gives it to his three-year-old daughter and seven-year-old son to try. If they have trouble using it, he gives it back to Fregosa to update.

His children were very busy last year as Puma and his wife undertook the building of a new house for their family, a house which would also be used as a product testing facility and a showroom where he could demonstrate home automation systems to clients.

"We don't like to sell products that we haven't used in our own homes," he explains. "Every electronic system in my house has stood up to the use and abuse of my family, and it's something we would recommend. And because clients see us using it here, they can believe in it."

Puma's two-story, 3500 square foot New Jersey residence includes two home theaters, a total of five additional TVs and a 19-zone audio system, plus automated control of its lighting, climate, and security systems. Everything is controlled with Crestron technology, including the DigitalMedia™ network and Crestron lighting control products.



Building the systems

Although the house the Puma family purchased was brand new, it was nearly finished by the time they saw it, making the technology installation a little more challenging than in a home built to order. While Puma uses wireless systems, he's a strong believer in hardwired networks as well. "WiFi® is only as good as your Internet provider, so there are bound to be outages from time to time," he explains. "There's a lot to be said for a system that does not go down when the Internet is out."

Puma and his technicians installed a Crestron DigitalMedia network based on Crestron-certified Cat6 cable, with wires run to every conceivable place he may someday install a video or audio component, a speaker, control screen or interface. "We know the Crestron infrastructure is extremely reliable," he says.

He adds that, in negotiating the purchase, the builder expressed reservations about his plans, since the sheetrock was already installed. "But we showed him how we would access the first floor through the basement ceiling and the second floor from the attic. I think he was surprised at how few holes we made as we installed all the wiring."

“

It's amazing. In the old days, it was rare when our customers wanted to add to their systems, but since we've started working with Crestron, we give them a taste and then they have to have the whole meal.”

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Highlights of the systems

Puma's design team started with the basics: television, audio, climate, and security. He is a musician, so sound quality was a very high priority. "I have my music on 24/7. It takes away stress and keeps me sane." While he loves high-performance Paradigm® loudspeakers, Puma says he appreciates Crestron audio as well and was surprised to find that the lower-cost Crestron speakers live up to his high standards.



“They sound really, really good. They’re easy to install, and they have a nice aesthetic,” he explains. This summer he installed Crestron’s new outdoor speakers in his front entrance and back yard. “I was waiting for something that sounds great yet is small enough to look good outdoors.”

Audio sources include a Crestron CEN-NSP-1 music server, as well as Internet radio and docking stations for the iPod®. The audio distribution and amplification is handled by a Crestron Sonnex® Multiroom Audio System (for up to 24 sources and 24 zones of audio).

The team added a home theater setup in the family room and another in his son’s room, both with Blu-ray™ players, surround sound, video games, and connection to a centralized movie server, as well as cable and online video sources. A DM16X16 switcher makes it possible to route any video source to any TV in the home.

Light it up

Early on, Puma decided to install centralized Crestron lighting. “We have it in every room, and I have to say that it’s the best part of our home.” A centralized lighting system, he explains, makes it easy to set the mood for any kind of family activity or party by programming the levels of individual lights. “My son has learned everything he can about this system,

and he’s constantly asking us for suggestions, then reprogramming certain scenes.” For example, it’s easy now for Puma to make his way from the master bedroom on the second floor to the kitchen on the first floor in the middle of the night. “I can press one button and certain lights turn on, all at a nice low, comfortable level, so I can go down and get a little midnight snack.” When the family comes home from an evening away, they can press a button on the iPhone® to turn on a path of lights from the garage to the kitchen and the main areas of the house.

Convenience and security

Puma says he will often surprise visitors with the variety of items he can operate from his Crestron system. “It was really simple, for example, to open and close the garage doors from my iPhone.” Puma recently installed the new door locks Crestron introduced in partnership with Yale® Locks. They allow family members to lock the house simply by touching the lockset, and to unlock it using a key, a keycode or the Crestron iPhone app. “I like the fact that I can open the door for a friend or a relative, or even for my UPS driver, using my iPhone when I’m away. And I think it’s fantastic that, when my kids are a little older, I’ll be able to track when they’ve been in or out of the house. The system adds an extra level of convenience and security to our lives.”



Convenience and security

To a large degree, the Puma home is a work in progress, changing constantly as new technologies come along and as the family grows. Puma says he has been working on the nursery, as the couple just had their third child, a son, in May. “I really haven’t been happy with the baby monitors I’ve been able to find, so we’ve designed our own system with a night vision camera and a better microphone, so we can hear if the baby’s breathing and see if he’s rolled over.”

Crestron control and automation

This kind of flexibility, coupled with the ease of use and reliability of the technology, has changed the way The Source does business since they became a Crestron dealer in 2011.

“I tell my wife I’m amazed at the number of years I wasted not offering Crestron products,” Puma says. “So many integrators are reluctant to call back a customer and ask them how things are working, just because their suppliers offer unreliable systems and poor support. That never happens with Crestron.

“For example, when we first installed the Yale locks, we ran into an issue. As Crestron tech support walked me step by step through troubleshooting, we realized that what was happening wasn’t on the Crestron end. But instead of telling me to call Yale, the technician said,

‘Wait a minute. I’ll get Yale on the line.’ At that point, it was a quick conversation, and the three of us came up with a solution right away. That, to me, is superior customer service. Crestron operates at a higher level than other companies, and it’s something I’ve learned from, so I can offer better service from The Source.”

Today, Puma adds, he feels confident calling back old customers. “So far this year, every single one has told me, ‘It’s working great, so much so that we’d like to add something to our system.’”

He says he now understands the kind of satisfaction they’re experiencing on a very personal level. “When you come home to a system like this, you feel good. It’s very simple to set up everything in your house just the way you want it – lights, music, temperature, the mood, and the climate. And when you have friends coming over, you know you can show it off, because it’s going to work every time.”

“It’s amazing,” he adds. “In the old days, it was rare when our customers wanted to add to their systems, but since we’ve started working with Crestron, we give them a taste and then they have to have the whole meal.”

Integrator

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Programmer

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