

INSIDE CI



Back once again to impart the benefit of his brains, the busiest man in the business, DAVE 'I Get Around' SLATER, brings us the month *INSIDE CI*. There's even a movie review this month... for some reason...

Well just like my Editor, boss of this wonderful publication, I am finding it hard to believe just where this year has vanished to; clearly I should have joined the circus years ago as I have found that I am good at keeping numerous plates spinning at one time without dropping any. Custom Install is up and down but we have been really busy lately, with a newly completed 450 square foot, £500,000 pad in W2. I am still amazed that we fitted three TVs in such a small space, but we have an Adnotam waterproof model in the bathroom, a nice 32-inch smart Samsung in the bedroom and the jaw dropping new Panasonic 55-inch covered in a black glass surround in the lounge. As space was limited, on the sound side, we plumbed in some Amina plaster-over speakers and wedged the super slim Paradigm subwoofer behind the Italian made sofa.

But then space is a premium luxury in Central London, so clever design is the very top of the list when putting together your proposal. The screen was a big challenge as the entrance of the flat was open plan onto the lounge, so a screen jutting out the wall would have looked Susan Boyle ugly. This was one reason for going for the new super slim (only 27mm) smart screen – with the wall being adapted to house the screen we had a sheet of 12 mm black glass machined with all the contours to follow the Panasonic, and this looked really sexy.

With such small spaces, lighting design is also very important. To that end we chose to wall wash up and down with some nicely designed Delta Lights controlled via Rako dimmers. A big plus to this job was Rako's RF range of dimmer modules – as the flat is sandwiched into the middle of a Victorian terraced block, a full rewire was not possible. Added to this another trick we used was LED profiles built into furniture to create depth and space.

All By Myself

One plus point of this contract was that, because it was so small, I had a stab at the install all by my lonesome. Yes, you are reading that correctly – I put my overalls on, took my tools out of the shed and really enjoyed turning out a neat install. It works well, needed the odd programming fix, but it looks great and made our client happy to boot.

So with my tools safely back in the shed now, it's time to change my hat and get into some *INSIDE CI* business. I have been truly amazed by the quality of work I have seen from fellow installers recently – the benchmark on quality is super high. Home cinema has entered a new realm with quality projectors changing otherwise average cinema rooms into super high resolution viewing dens. And with the amazing 4k settling in, things will only get even better!

We've also had quite the event calendar of late, with *Grand Designs* in Birmingham featuring the CEDIA technology village, and then we had CEDIA's *The Future of Technology* forum with the CEDIA AGM in London – an



Even from the pages of this magazine, Kevin is judging you...



A Grand event indeed.

essential event for those who wanted to be educated by experts on where technology is taking us.

What we learnt reinforced what we all know: times are changing for custom installers. IT is going to feature more and more in our installs and there is a lot to learn! IT is a complex business – get it right and your control system is stable, get it wrong and you are going to have nothing but hassle, IP addresses clashing, keypads freezing, CCTV cameras locking up and screens not turning on; a nightmare! So it was with interest that I read Habitech are working to help you with this said IT knowledge. They'll be running a two day IT course which will include information on how to set-up routers correctly, choose ports for remote access and get a stable network infrastructure. Even if you have been installing for years this looks like a worthy course. And Habitech ProNet will also offer Draytek IPv6-ready routers alongside the Ruckus wireless infrastructure range. With Habitech's pedigree in training, I am sure you will come away with some new techniques.

More Blu Movies

With a short trip up north, it was time to dust off some of the Blu-ray discs I have had in the cupboard for a couple of years, open the OPPO tray and play *The Book of Eli*. Wow, what an amazing movie – I was gripped from scene one! The 7:1 soundtrack was amazingly engaging and the scene where (*Warning: Dave Slater may contain spoilers. – Ed*) Eli is involved in the shoot-out within the old rundown shack is a work of art. My B&W 800 series had the best workout they have ever had since I installed them eight years ago! If you don't have this Blu-ray get straight onto the internet and order it now, it will also double as one of the best demo room discs you can use.

Leisure aside, it was back to school for me last week with a visit to Unicom in Leeds who were hosting a Demopad training course. Demopad is a clever piece of software that at £27.99 will not break the bank and can be downloaded from the Apple App store. With this software you will be able to control your AV room and whole house systems via IP interfaces. The initial software even comes with free templates that will get you started. The course was well worth attending as it takes you further into the software to allow you to customise how the whole iPad or iPhone app looks and feels. Now, I hear you say, there's not much profit in selling a £27.99 piece of software, but you would be mistaken! It's not the software you are offering, it's your programming skills, as its obvious from the outset of the course that, if you are a novice buying it off the internet and coupling it together, you will never have the flash all singing and dancing solution of a true integrator. Check it out on www.demopad.com and look out for their courses they are being held all over the country.



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