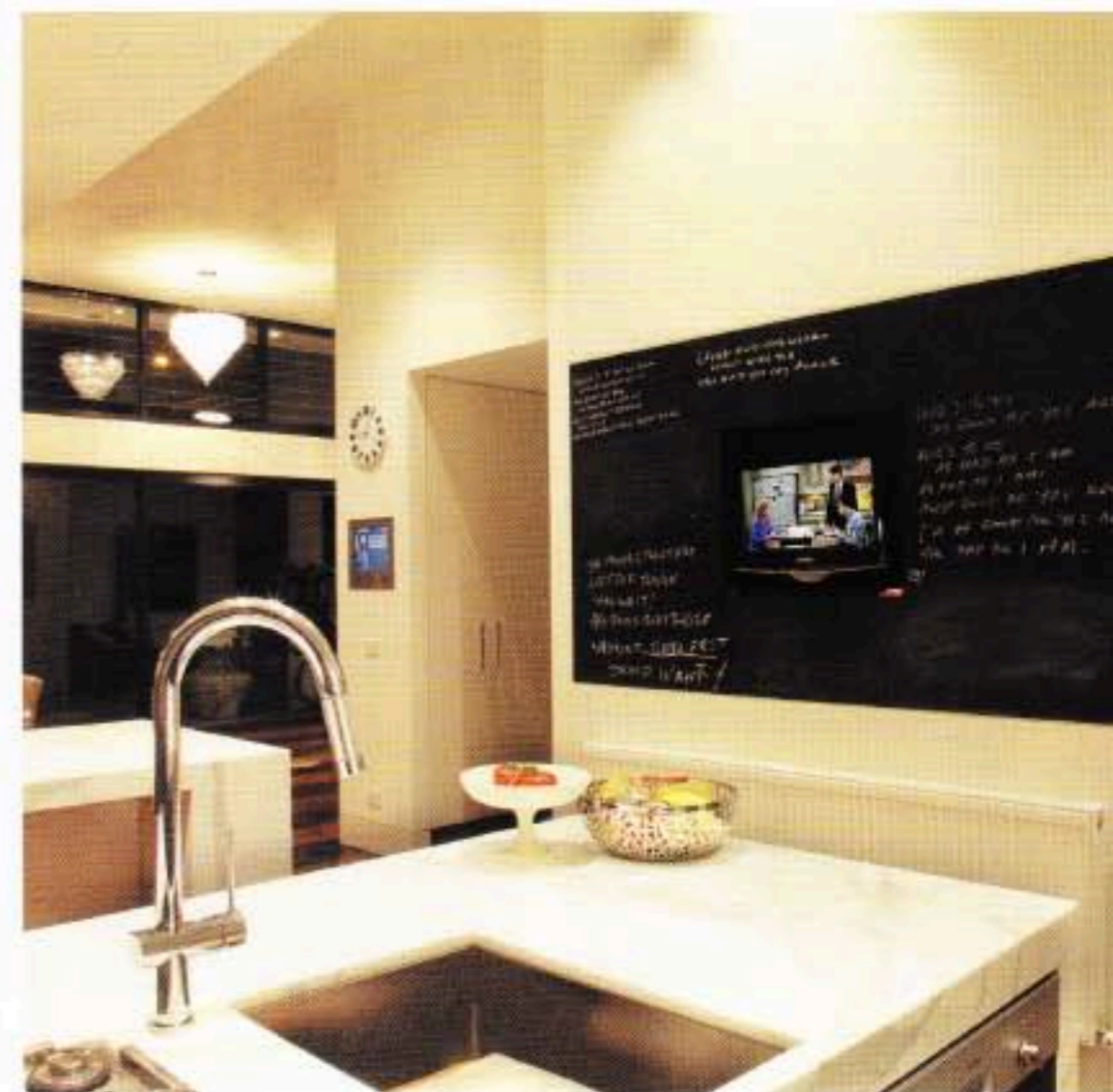


What does THIS BUTTON DO?

A smart home isn't just about the gadgets,
it's about knowing how to use your home's
controls to their full potential.





When installing automation in your home you can decide on what type of technology you want, how many systems are installed and what type of cabling you want to use. But there's one thing you don't want to forget to factor in: Are you going to be able to understand your smart home when the time comes to use it?

According to Advanced Lifestyle Solutions director Michael Stavrou, the first question people ask about their custom installation is whether or not they're going to be able to understand it.

"From the start we are basically told: 'if this thing is hard to use you're pulling it out!'" he says.

"A lot of clients, they don't even know what it does, it's tucked away in cupboards. They really only care about how they can use it and how to operate it."

For Mark Pejic, having a smart home that

his friends and family could understand was paramount to his vision of home automation.

"The house deserved the technology, the design aspects of the home are such that it would have been a shame not to do it," he says.

"I just wanted to achieve something that was simple, functional, reliable, and could work from a central point."

The Pejic home was designed as a fully integrated home so the family can operate it from one central point, or even remotely from their Apple iPhone or iPad.

"All the systems are integrated as one system," Michael says.

"Even though they are all treated as individual, we have got them so that you can control them all from one location."

The designated media room is one area that operates like this. From pushing a button to watch Foxtel, the projector screen will lower, the projector turns on and

the lights dim, all preparing for the full media experience. Mark says he's got a lot of enjoyment out of this specific room.

"It's something that I use a lot," he says.

"It's good for entertaining and it's good for relaxing. And I'm sure as my children grow up they'll use it more and more."

But having a system that is easy to use wasn't the only consideration for Mark and his family. They also wanted technology that would be subtle in the home and fit with the interior design.

"They were very specific in their interior design, especially in the media room," Michael says.

"They didn't want to see any sort of technology hanging around."

Finding ways to get around this issue, he says, was the hardest part about installing the system.

"It just doesn't look appealing, especially

on a lot of these high-end homes."

Most keypads and covers have been powder-coated to match the colours of the walls on which they are mounted. Technological elements that would usually protrude, such as the projector screen, are tucked away in power boxes, and even the speakers in the media room have been painted to match the colour of the ceiling.

"It's not something that was added on and is kind of quite obvious," says Mark.

"It just looks like it always should have been there."

While he wasn't initially thinking of having automation installed in his house, Mark says that he doesn't regret anything about how his smart home operates. It was the electricians who really convinced him to go with a full automation system.

"They could foresee that it would be a good investment for the type of house that it was," he says.

"I think it would have put the house backward a bit if I went with just a standard electrical system."

It's these electrical systems that are evolving in the industry and setting up smart homes for both easy use and installation in the future. Data cabling that runs across an entire home is what Michael says will make upgrading home systems more accessible.

"We find that we can run a lot of technology through data cabling now, where before we needed audio cabling and video cabling," he says.

"Now it's going down through that home network, which brings another issue of reliability of the home network. It's got to be very good."

"Because technology moves so fast there are always things coming out in the market that you could add," Mark says.

"It's just a nice finish to have in the home, it makes things more functional." >



Michael suggests understanding the infrastructure of the cabling you're going to have installed in your home, before choosing what equipment you want.

"A lot of people look at equipment first and then cabling," he says.

"But by the time most people move into their houses the equipment they were originally looking at is obsolete."

It's an ongoing issue, being able to understand how to use your system, and how to best install it. Whether in a new or existing home, Michael recommends sitting down with an integrator to help plan your controls, design and system.

It was sitting down with Michael that really helped Mark understand what technology would benefit himself and his family.

"I'm not very technologically minded, but he certainly involved me in the process," he says.

"I signed off on it and then upgraded a few bits and pieces as we went through, but it was really at his recommendation at the end of the day."

"We get all the technology in there and work out a way in the design to make it blend," Michael says.

"It really comes right down to the early design days to make that system blend into the house that they're building"

But what kind of impact does having a fully automated home, that is subtle yet easy to use, have on the home owner who originally hadn't thought to automate their home?

"I wouldn't say life's changed," says Mark.

"But there's no way that I would have not done it, and if I didn't, I would have regretted it." ☺

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