



Simplicity and Vision in Wine Country

Summit Electronic Systems

>> by **MARGOT DOUAIHY**

REFUSING TO LIMIT ITSELF TO ANY PARTICULAR GENRE OF CUSTOM INSTALLATION, SUMMIT ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS HAS CREATED A VISIONARY BUSINESS MODEL. BASED IN PETALUMA, CALIF., SUMMIT ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS IS PART OF THE LARGER SUMMIT TECHNOLOGY GROUP AND DOES ITS AV INTEGRATION THROUGH A TROIKA OF THREE DISTINCT DEPARTMENTS—DESIGN TRACK, FAST TRACK AND COMMERCIAL.

DesignTrack, SES's heavy-lifting department, takes on only large-

scale, non-commercial projects ranging in cost from \$100,000 to over \$1,000,000. Since 1990, Summit Electronic Systems has been a leading provider of dedicated and family room home theaters for clients, customized to specific lifestyles and artfully integrated within the aesthetics of their interior décor. A hallmark Summit home theater system offers the highest quality video displays, speakers that both look stunning (or are cleverly hidden) and please the most serious listener. The entire package is united and operated by a user-friendly control system with a remote or touch panel that





is personalized to reflect individual client needs.

FastTrack, Summit's other residential install department, handles smaller integration projects ranging in cost from \$1,000 to \$100,000.

Last but not least, SES's Commercial department, as its name suggests, deals strictly with non-residential commercial endeavors. "What's unique about our company is that we don't limit ourselves to large or small...we combine our skills and knowledge to offer all the different types of system to our customers," says Vinny Bagala, division general manager of SES.

Along with offering this diverse array of services, SES builds on its client base due to its savory location. Situated in the heart of Sonoma County's wine region, SES's client portfolio includes some

of the nation's finest wineries. "As the wine industry becomes more and more competitive, wineries are striving to have the most appealing facilities for visitors," Bagala says. This movement from mere tourist attraction to the ultimate wine country destination means that wineries are regularly soliciting custom electronic systems. "At the wineries, we are installing plasmas screens in the tasting rooms that can show a loop of the winemaking process, and distributing audio throughout the wine tasting areas and business centers," he adds. "Wineries are also moving toward renting out their facilities for corporate events—so we're installing video conferencing capabilities for high-end corporate meetings and conferences."

The technological innovation extends into the automation and control arena as well, a particularly important category in the resi-





dential division. In a typical Summit installation, everything from the drapes to the thermostat to the landscaping is tied into one system that clients can easily control. No matter what size the home or how many rooms are included in the project, through precise engineering, the Summit crew can integrate all the audio and video sources, the lighting system, motorized window shades and drapes, security system and status, sprinklers and the HVAC system. The whole home can be operated from the clients' fingertips on intuitive touch panels located throughout the home.

To meet the demands presented by such a diverse range of projects, Bagala relies on a talented design staff and a time-tested approach to custom installation. "We do primarily everything in house and use internal engineers who design and engineer each of the systems we do," Bagala explains. They also don't try to recreate the wheel in terms of system design. We limit the number and types of products to a few of the best ones, so there is uniformity of operation," he adds. The Summit consultation method also as-





sures uniformity and consistency while thoroughly exploring each client's expectations and lifestyle needs. Upfront client engagement is vital, so is a dialog that outlines the scope of the project and lets clients understand the Summit processes. Project completion is just as important as the initial consultation, according to Bagala, who believes Summit not only meets every clients' needs, but exceeds them. "We have a customer service manager that handles exceeding customer expectations from the end of the project on, through training on into warranty service," he says.

The result is seamless system operation from one house to another, providing a tremendous benefit to the client. "Some of our clients have city homes and country homes," Bagala says, "and we give them the same user interface and use the same systems in both venues."

Bagala knows his clients' lives are enhanced dramatically by maximizing efficiency. "With some of our clients, simplicity of integrating control isn't just a convenience," he says, "it's a necessity." ■



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