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That's where we'd head, were we lucky enough to live in this luxurious smart home... though there's a theatre downstairs too. Mmm...

Installation by Chase AV; control by RTI.

Welcome to a home which is filled with music and entertainment — and we're not just talking about the equipment installed by Chase AV, which oversaw the connected side of this newly-renovated home in Sydney. We're talking about the owners and their lifestyle.

"It's a great family," says Chase AV's founder Erin Murphy. "They're always playing music through the home, and they love their entertainment, as well as entertaining others. So while with some jobs you wonder how much use people will make of the options you've made available, this was a job where we knew the family would love and use the results."

Erin could be confident of this because he already knew the family from a previous installation. "A few years ago I was called in at the eleventh hour on a previous unit renovation, and I got along well with the client — and managed to make the stuff he'd bought work. So this time he let me source the gear as well. The scope I was given was 'I want it to kick arse!' — so basically free rein. Though of course I knew there was an unspoken budget; I never went silly."
We haven’t included an image of the front of the home, for reasons of anonymity, but it’s surprisingly ‘standard’ given what lies within — red brick frontage and tiled roofing, heavil-
laden boughs of Banks’ grevillea adding colour in front of the main bay window. But inside this was a major renovation, including “a massive excavation that people tried to talk him out of!” Erin told us. “But that means he now has the underground garage [pictured overleaf] and the home cinema off the garage.”

Once through the front door the home opens up, with an open-plan living and kitchen area, large rooms for Mum, Dad and the kids, while out back is the very cool pool area pictured here, with its adjacent cabana “for when the family needs to sleep, but Dad and his mates want to kick on”, explains Erin.

To help them kick on, this ‘pool room’ is equipped with a Samsung TV with sources including a Foxtel cable box and Apple TV, and with full control of lighting and blinds.

With their penchant for hosting parties, the owners of the home will be putting their AV components to good use during gatherings. But they won’t want to be wasting time fiddling with multiple remote controls to play music or videos when they should be with their guests. So an effective overall control system was always a fundamental decision. Erin says he considered a few solutions, but didn’t take long to settle on RTI.

“RTI was chosen because every user interface it has available is great,” says Erin. “Obviously you need the technical ability to bring all your systems under one control system, but equally important as far as the end user goes is how easy it is to operate. Some control systems have no remotes and just work on iOS phones and iPads. Others have terrible remotes, and most have cheesy interfaces. One great thing about RTI is that it’s so established that you can incorporate third-party design templates. We used Noel Blackman’s Aleera suite for the remote and iOS interfaces [shown above]. It looks super cool and the client wants that look. Some dealers reckon people don’t care about these things, but I do — and I think my clients do too. In this case, it was a perfect fit.”
Distributed entertainment

So there are three AV entertainment zones in the home, including the downstairs theatre, plus there is music distributed to other zones. Video sources in the living room (pictured right) follow the set-up in the pool room cabana, using a Foxtel cable box and Apple TV with a Samsung display, and again the RTI control system also operating the room’s Clipsal C-Bus lighting and blind control.

“The C-Bus integration was super-easy” says Chase AV’s Erin Murphy. “I worked with the sparkie on the job and used the C-Bus driver from My Device (a Queensland-based software development company) to bring all that control into the Aleera graphic interface. It was one of the easiest parts of the install — but possibly the most impressive result.”

For getting music around the home, Chase AV went with Sonos as the solution.

“I kept this native,” says Erin. “I didn’t want service calls every time Sonos did an update and broke the driver. In the living room Sonos is piped to the front LCR speakers via a power amp and trigger switch.

The home cinema

“The home cinema is not a large one”, admits Erin, “but it’s very useable, and welcoming! It’s not the tucked-away dungeon that most cinemas end up being. The kids can spend time there — we’ve made it super-simple to bring up kids’ entertainment, so the parents can bribe them with a movie in the cinema if everyone needs a break.”

Small it may be, but well-equipped, with an Optoma projector illuminating an Accent projection screen, sources again including Foxtel and Apple TV but also a Pioneer Blu-ray player. The processing and power are provided by an Integra receiver driving a combination of DALI and Sonance speakers.

“The DALI speakers were owned by the client already”, says Erin. “I added the Sonance in-ceiling speakers to give him a 7.1-channel surround system. And it’s all controlled using either the RTI remote there, or an iPad.”

Behind the RTI scenes, as it were, the Integra receiver and Optoma projector are controlled via RS-232, the Foxtel and Blu-ray are controlled through infra-red, while the Apple TV uses an IP driver from My Device, with all the elements coming together via a push of the iPad interface or the press of a button on the physical RTI T2x handheld remote (pictured).

Chase AV chose to build the home’s control and automation around RTI’s XP-6 control processor (pictured), supplemented with a PCM-4 port control module and two ZM-24 Zigbee transceiver modules for control and communication between the processor and the handheld remote controls. The XP-6 controls the Samsung displays, Foxtel cable boxes, three of the four Apple TVs, and the theatre’s Pioneer Blu-ray player via IR. The Optoma projector is controlled by RS-232, while two-way IP drivers created by My Device provide seamless integration with an Apple TV 4 and the Clipsal C-Bus lighting and blinds system.

The homeowners have complete control over their technology using three T2x handheld remote controls, in addition to an iPhone and iPad running the RTiPanel app. Here’s the list of RTI products used:

- XP-6 control processor
- T2x handheld remotes x 3
- Unlimited RTiPanel license for iOS devices
- PCM-4 port control module
- ZM-24 Zigbee transceiver module x 2
- ESC-2+ Serial Converter

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RTI EQUIPMENT LIST

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