

New York, New York



Photo courtesy of Osbee Industries, Inc.

Crestron integrated system simplifies security, lighting, HVAC and home entertainment in Art Collector's Home

Background

"We went out to this beautiful Manhattan townhouse to talk about a new intercom system and started asking questions. I had never seen an art collection like this in a private home. But hanging next to the paintings were these ugly control devices – three, four and even 12-gang light switches, thermostats, humidity sensors, and controls for the home audio system. We asked the homeowner if he had ever thought about replacing them all with a single, integrated system," said Dave Raines, President of New York home automation contractor Osbee Industries, Inc.

"Our clients just thought it was the way it had to be," Raines explains. "It's like the lock on a car door. If no one ever told you that you could use a remote to open it instead of a key, you wouldn't really think about it. You would just go on thinking you need a key."

Raines and his engineers began explaining what an integrated home is all about, and the homeowner liked what he heard. "Yes, that's a good idea," he would say. "Do it." Osbee worked hand in hand with a security contractor and various tradesmen to tear out the piecemeal systems and replace them with new electronics tied together with a sophisticated Crestron control and automation system.

The new system brings security, lighting, heating, air conditioning, audio and video together so that they can be controlled by customized touch screens that make operations extremely simple.

The new security system

Since security was the homeowner's first priority, Raines says the design began with an upgrade to the home's intercom and video surveillance systems. In addition to burglar and fire alarms, the townhouse now includes an automated surveillance system with multiple digital cameras.



Photo courtesy of Osbee Industries, Inc.

When visitors ring the doorbell, their image automatically appears on ten 15" Crestron touch screens strategically located throughout the residence. Family members can see and speak to the visitors (and to each other) from a built-in microphone and speaker in each touch screen tied to a HoloVision™ entry system at the front door. The Crestron system includes a quad-view video processor, so they can see visitors and what they are carrying from four angles at once, or view up to four different locations in the house at the same time.

Once they are satisfied and they want to let the visitor in – or if they need to monitor or activate the burglar or fire alarm systems – they can do so from the touch screens.

Lighting and climate

Another priority for Osbee was to eliminate the large number of individual light switches installed throughout the residence. To do so, Osbee opened walls, removed the old switches and much of the wiring, and replaced them with a new system with simple control. Now family members can turn on any or all rooms' lights from any Crestron touch screen, or they can control an individual room's lighting from a single, elegantly engraved push-button keypad mounted on the wall.

Because the homeowner is a serious art collector, the works he owns exceed the wall space available to display them. The homeowner and his staff are constantly changing what's being shown, and the lighting needs to change accordingly. For that reason, Osbee included simplified adjustment screens on the touch screens, allowing staff without technical skills to fine-tune each fixture. Osbee also included a few wireless Crestron dimmers so that the homeowner can plug in

temporary fixtures for specific setups, yet still control them from the central system.

In addition to the lighting, Osbee integrated seven groups of motorized shades and three motorized drapery tracks with preprogrammed settings for privacy and sunlight control.

Air temperature and humidity are crucial to any serious art collector so Osbee set up the Crestron system to give the homeowner simplified monitoring and control of the home's heating and air conditioning. An added benefit of the integrated system is its ability to use nearly invisible wall sensors, eliminating an ugly thermostat and humidistat from each of eight climate zones.

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Audio and video

Entertainment is part of any home, and this family especially enjoys music and movies. The entertainment system now includes 16 audio zones, each of which can access any of five audio sources, plus six video displays, including a family room projection system with a 106" screen, flat-panel TVs in the master bedroom and gym, and three more flat panels in an upstairs sitting room dedicated to digital artwork. Osbee upgraded the projection system and its motorized lift, so that a touch of a button on a touch screen or handheld remote



brings the projector and screen down out of the ceiling, where they stay hidden when not in use.

Because today's video sources are digital and must be compliant with HDCP® copy protection and other requirements of the HDMI® digital standard, Osbee recommended Crestron DigitalMedia™ technology. In this home, DigitalMedia carries high-definition video and audio on a high-bandwidth IP network, together with the Internet and computer network traffic. At the homeowner's request, Osbee programmers added news and weather websites to the touch screens, keeping the family constantly up to date without the need to go to a computer.

"Although the technology is new, it's robust and reliable," Raines explains.

A happy client

Raines says the homeowner has been very happy with the new systems and has asked for several minor upgrades since it was first installed. "This is someone with very high standards," he says. "If it did not work perfectly, we would have had to

replace it by now. For that reason, our team pushed the envelope to the point where we asked Crestron to write new firmware for the touch screens to meet the unique needs of this installation – and they were glad to help us."

The fact that the project changed from a simple intercom upgrade into a whole home automation system came down to client education. "Nobody had ever presented the fact that you could integrate this all into one system, but once he understood that, the homeowner was really happy to have us do the work."

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