

Bella Castle Goes High-Tech

The beauty of Tuscany was the inspiration for the Bella Collina gated-community located in the rolling hills of Central Florida. Spanning more than 1,900 acres of land on the shores of Lake Apopka and Lake Siena, Bella Collina will be home to only 800 fortunate families. This setting is the location for the property referred to by Control4 dealer Merlin Home Technology as the Bella Castle.

Among the rolling hills, cobblestone streets and vineyards, these exclusive homes are built by a premier contractor with old-world craftsmanship. The Bella Castle at 11,000 square feet isn't the largest home that Merlin's automated, but the attention to detail makes this property a standout. A vacation property, this owner wanted this home to offer as many modern amenities as possible so he could control the house from a distance.

Starting from Scratch

Merlin was there from the beginning and the project. The project design took Don Dunn, Merlin's co-owner, a solid week. Installation happened over the course of several months. Automation in the home runs from roof to foundation.

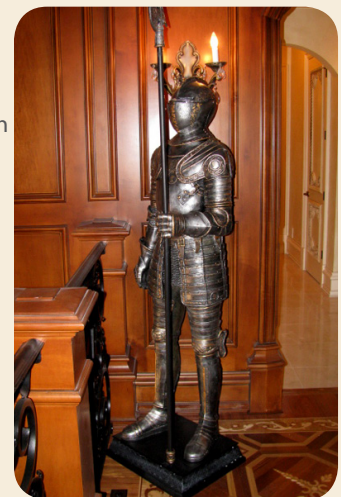
All 150 lights in the home are controlled by the Control4 system. Control4's automation extends outside to the exterior lights, turning them on and off at sunrise and sunset. Multiple lighting scenes give the homeowner the option to customize lighting throughout the house, even down to specific areas of the home including the master suite. With every window shade on the main floor is fully automated, west-facing shades are scheduled to close at particular time and then re-open, helping control interior temperatures.

Equipment

System management is handled by three Control4 7" touch screens, six Control4 mini touch screens, and via any television and the Control4 user interface. The home design includes an equipment room located in basement. To manage the home, Merlin installed an HC-1000 processor, 5 HC-300 processors, a Control4 multi-tuner, an audio matrix switch, two Control4 8-channel amps, a Sony video matrix switcher, and a Fusion video server.

First Class Entertainment

A highlight of the Bella Castle, the custom theater room features a rear projection setup with the projector in a separate room. When the projector turns on, the curtains open revealing a 153" screen and creating a true-theater experience for viewers. From the



comfort of his custom movie chairs, he has access to a 400-disc DVD changer, two region-free Blu-ray players, one regular DVD player, and two Dish Network dual-tuner satellite receivers. The Denon flagship receiver rounds out the viewing experience with amazing audio quality.

A Love for Music

A big fan of karaoke, the homeowner requested a custom setup. Merlin design a karaoke server to store thousands of songs and videos that's integrates with the theater system. The addition of four wireless microphones and an EQ system gives the homeowner an unmatched karaoke experience.



When not singing, he wanted to listen to Internet radio from around the world. Upstairs in the office, Merlin connected an HC-200 Controller to the computer system. When he chooses the computer, the homeowner can stream stored music or internet radio throughout the house. Audio even extends outdoors to three speakers positioned around the pool area.

Matching the Decor

Between the custom wood floors, hand-painted walls, and glittering chandeliers, modern technology doesn't blend very well. However, Merlin found a way to integrate Control4 without taking away anything from the craftsmanship. For example, in the dining room and breakfast room, Merlin installed Stealth Acoustic speakers. The speakers go in during construction and seem to disappear beneath the dry wall, plaster, and paint. The only sign the speakers exist? Place your hand on the walls and feel the sound vibrations. Control4 speakers are used throughout the rest of the house and integrated into the wood work.



Security and Efficiency

With the homeowner only onsite for a few months a year, he requested that Merlin also add the benefit of four Panasonic IP cameras to the GE security system. Motion sensors and pushing the doorbell triggers the cameras, turning on a feed to the televisions and touch screens in the home and alerting the homeowner to who's at the door. Camera panning and tilting is also available via the TVs, touch screens, or Control4's 4Sight program so he can take a look around his property even if he's in another country. Merlin took advantage of the house's location to place a camera facing westward to capture the beautiful sunsets that reflect in the home's infinity pool and water fall.

In addition to setting the lights at 30-50%, Merlin also invested a lot of money in power management. Two commercial battery back-ups, two line protectors, a surge protector, and a voltage stabilizer keep the power at a stable 120V. Merlin also sub-netted the Control4 network using a second router and a second access point. The combination of these two features increased overall system stability and ensures that even if power is lost, things will continue to run for almost two hours.

A Custom Touch

The suits of armor and the 6', hand-carved Austro-Hungarian coat of arms hanging on the wall is another sign that this home is far from ordinary. It seems only appropriate then, that Merlin's signature client touch, a custom sword, resides in the equipment room of this eclectic, old-world house. Men from Italy, Scotland, England, and Romania made this house a masterpiece. With Control4, Merlin turned it into a livable home with all the amenities anyone could hope for.