

# CREATIVITY, CONTROL & CARTOONS

Simon Oré uses Control4 to inspire his animation work—and avoid the Hollywood runaround

If you've seen *The Beckhams Come to LA*, you've seen Simon Oré's family home. You also could have chanced upon it in *GQ Magazine* or recognized the pool from a Ford Modeling Agency swimsuit shot. Perched on a cliff overlooking San Fernando Valley, the 7,000-square-foot modern industrial home can, as Simon puts it, "swing with the best of them."

Along with hosting the professionally beautiful, the Beverly Hills home is Simon's preferred

place to "get as much inspiration flowing as possible"—which he attributes largely to its Control4® features. The five-year-old system offers house-wide AV automation and a customized theater with a drop-down screen measuring 120 inches. We recently caught up with Simon—owner of Flamingoshoe, a company that produces content for networks like Comedy Central or Nickelodeon—to learn how Control4 frees him to follow his creativity down any rabbit hole that calls.



PHOTOS: REBECCA HENRY PHOTOGRAPHY

**Q. Tell us about your work.**

**A.** I work in animation. I'm a producer and a writer. I work with original content; I do different shorts and commercial work. I have a regular office and one that I work at from home—which I do whenever possible.

**Q. What are some of the animation projects you've worked on?**

**A.** Most of them are in the process of being made. Animation takes a long time. Toy Story took 12 years. We aren't Disney, so we don't have a hundred animators. But we do work with Comedy Central and Nickelodeon.

Right now we are working on something called *Space Fish*. Have you ever heard of "*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*"? It's by the guy who wrote *Brazil* and *Shakespeare in Love*, Tom Stoppard. It's about...well, as the creator puts it, it's The Hitchhikers Guide to Fear and Loathing in Wonderland.

**Q. Can you take us through a typical day?**

**A.** Normally, I get up very early to start digging the graves for the dead prostitutes from the night before. And then I shower (laughs).

Actually, it's a lot of emails, a lot of phone conversations, and a lot of reading manuscripts and books. Lots of lunch meetings at the house. I have tele-animators in Reno and Portland, so I spend a good amount of time communicating with them too.

Ultimately, it's different every day. Though, really, it's a lot of watching things and reading things. Other than that, it's driving from point A



The Control4® app makes it easy to monitor the many rooms in the house via a tablet or a smart phone. Here, a view of the kitchen is pictured.

to point B. It's very boring, but you deal with interesting people and interesting things.

**Q. What is it like working from home?**

**A.** My home office is very Control4-centric. The whole house is wired. Everything from heating to lights can be remotely accessed and used.

We've got the system to handle five different people watching five different media on five different systems. My mom can be watching something in her bedroom and something completely different in her bathroom. We don't have

to have twenty boxes and twenty DVD players.

Also, I have the TV hooked up to the Internet. Without leaving the room, I can pull up a movie anywhere or showcase a scene that I'm working on. We have over a hundred DVDs in the system, including ones that I've made. It makes things so much easier.

**Q. How else does Control4 technology help you do your work?**

**A.** I have everything that fuels my creativity—everything that I love—at my fingertips. I feel lucky that I work in an awesome

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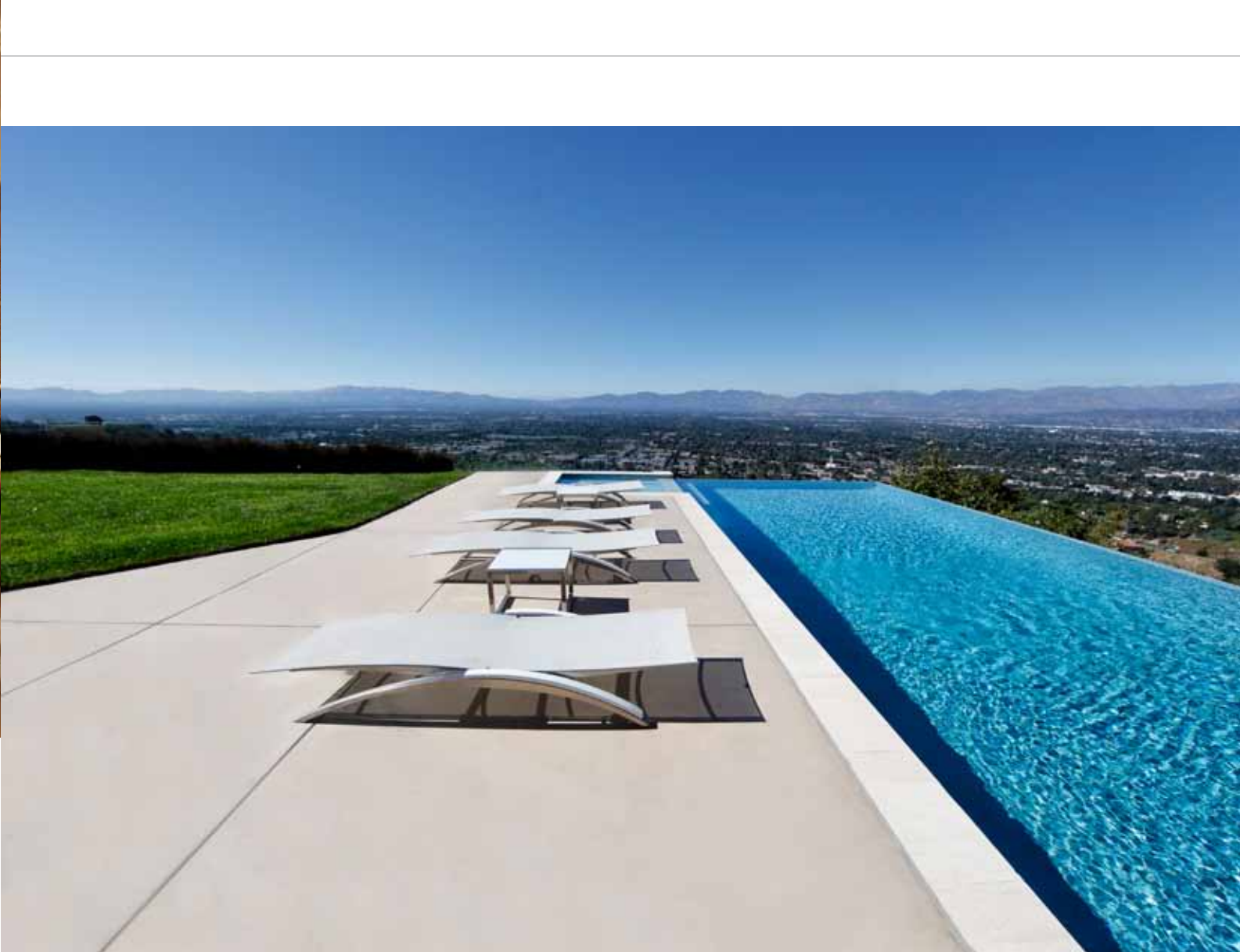
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A stunning view from the backyard overlooks San Fernando Valley.

smart house where I can pull up a spoken-word album that inspires me or a DVD with a great scene—just like that. If I had to do it the normal way, I might lose the thread that I was so excited to follow.

### Q. Can you give us an example?

A. Say I'm in a meeting and someone says, "Have you seen the movie *Putney Swope*? It's with Robert Downy Senior—Robert Junior's dad. Well, when you see it, you realize that when Robert Downy Jr.'s doing the whole

blackface bit in *Tropic Thunder*, it's basically a recreation of what his Dad did in *Putney Swope*.

Now, normally, I'd lose 25 minutes just finding this. But instead I can pull it up within minutes and not derail the creative direction of the conversation. In the middle of a business meeting, I can pull it up. That is awesome.

Look, I try to get as much inspiration flowing for me and my writers from as many sources as possible. The fact that Control4 helps me do that is awesome. It's a total boon and a total asset.

### Q. Are there other benefits to being able to work from home?

A. At this point, most of my meetings are at home. It's cheaper and you get more stuff done. In LA, you have to have four lunches before contracts are signed. I don't like that. It pisses me off. I don't like wasting time.

We do have an office in Beverly Hills South, in Wilshire. We do a lot of production stuff there and sometimes I take meetings there. But I have to tell you, when you are used to living and working in

PHOTOS: REBECCA HENRY PHOTOGRAPHY



**Q ■ How does Control4 help with guests?**

**A ■** If guests want music or they don't want music, if the lights are too much or not enough—whatever it is, I can do it from the remote control. If a guest is in the kitchen and can't find the lights, I can just turn them on for them with the remote. I love that ability—to be able to control my whole house from a remote control.

What I love about the Control4 system is that it's very self-explanatory. Whatever they want—comfort, music, TV—they can pretty much figure it out on their own. And clearly, that's nice for me. Instead of constantly answering questions—and the same ones especially—it's so easy, they can figure it out on their own.

I mean, when I stay at friends' places, sometimes there are just so many remote controls—and half of



PHOTOS: REBECCA HENRY PHOTOGRAPHY

Simon loves the notion of having a remote for every room in the house. And not just to manage his media clips but also to control lights, drapes, temperature and more.

them don't even work. But here, it's really like staying in a hotel. Some of our guests only speak French. Well there's a touch screen for

people who don't speak English. It's completely self-explanatory because it's in images. It's so easy. ■

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