

NEW: Column by MSNBC's Practical Futurist, see page 64

Hanley Wood's

Digital HOME

SUMMER 2006

ENABLING THE DIGITAL LIFESTYLE

Wired

Love That Music—and Video, Too

Connecticut builder family extends love of home electronics to its customers.

ABOUT 45 MINUTES WEST of Hartford, Conn., in Roxbury, a father-and-son team builds million-dollar homes for the digital generation.

All homes built by Corbo Associates come standard with structured wiring—two Cat-5 and two RG-6 connections in six locations—and buyers can opt for a series of audio and video packages. They can also choose distributed audio in six rooms for \$1,000 a room; the video packages start at \$8,000 and run to about \$17,000.

In a 21st-century house, accessing the Internet should be as easy as turning the lights on, says Colin Corbo, 28, adding that his interest in technology started with his father, owner Ralph Corbo, 59.

"My dad was always in a band, buying equipment," says Colin, who was certified as an integrator by the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association last year. "I remember [Yamaha's] first Dolby surround-sound processors. It's something we've always loved."

Six years ago, Ralph built a house for his family that had structured wiring and a home theater. The family enjoyed it so much, they decided to offer the technology to their customers. Corbo Associates builds about 10 homes a year. The average house is

4,000 square feet, and homes sell from \$600,000 to \$1.1 million.

Colin, who installs the technology and also is the company's project super, says that Corbo uses Polk Audio in-wall speakers and wireless remote controllers and players from Sonos. Music, stored in a network-attached storage hard drive, is distributed wirelessly through the Sonos devices. The video packages come with Polk Audio 7.1 surround sound, Denon receivers and DVD players, and, usually, Samsung or Sharp televisions. (www.corbogroup.com)

HI-TECH HOMES: Corbo Associates offers three video packages and whole-house audio installed by a CEDIA-certified integrator.

