

Hi Fi — High Style



New Design for Home Entertainment

Just as a couch should be comfortable to sit in and should also look good in the room, so should the television, the speakers, and other technology components. Things should be proportionate to their environment (for the converse, think of an otherwise well-balanced living room with a giant screen TV sitting in its midst like a 300-pound gorilla), and in some cases the design may blend in with the rest of the room. Speakers may be placed in the ceiling. Television screens may disappear into a cabinet, behind a wall, or even behind an oil painting.

These days, Pennington said, more speakers are being manufactured with wood or with colored anodized aluminum to make the surfaces more reflective. "They're designed to be chameleon-like, to fit into their surroundings," he said.

"It's important," Pennington added. "Things that go into your living room are things you'll be looking at on a daily basis. If they don't take away from the design, and

One need not ever have seen a Rock Hudson-Doris Day movie to realize the importance of a good audio-visual system to set the proper mood. In the romantic Manhattan comedies of the 1960s, a leading man could dim the lights and pipe in romantic jazz with the flick of a well-hidden switch. From there, who knows where things could go?

Of course, flick the wrong switch and things may go horribly wrong. Suddenly the lights are flashing, the records are skipping, and the disappearing bed is making its appearance at the most inopportune time.

Believe it or not, that scenario isn't too far from the one some homeowners find themselves in when they try to integrate different units of technology. On paper, different brands may seem like they'd integrate well, until the homeowner uses the remote control to start the DVD player and the TV set shuts off.

"It's pretty amazing what can be done, but our approach is that we don't want the customer to have to be the guinea pig," says Oliver Pennington, president and owner of Bang & Olufsen, located on Newbury Street and at the Boston Design Center. "Often, things look better on paper than in reality. We always use systems that have given us proven results."

Pennington, like other specialists in the home entertainment and technology integration business, finds himself working more and more with designers who realize the difference technology can make towards satisfying the needs of their clients. His company and another called Total Home Technology have established a presence at the Boston Design Center to give designers better access to their services, and an understanding of the many technology options available to their clients. Designers are realizing that audio, video and other components can enhance their creative solutions.

Bang & Olufsen has always realized the importance of the way its products fit the decor of its customers' lives. That's a reason it has placed 22 of its pieces in the Museum of Modern Art, and why it's won more design awards than any other audio-visual company in the world.

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Courtesy of Bang & Olufsen.

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