



# Alpine Home Media

Custom Home Systems

Home Theater & Audio • Networks • Automation

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## *A word about the all encompassing nature of a good home theater installation.*

While today's entertainment systems provide an incredible entertainment experience, they are considerably more expensive and complex than they were just 10 years ago.

As with many high tech systems, the integration of the individual components along with how they fit into the operating environment are critical to achieving the best results.

Unfortunately, because these components are somewhat familiar as standard consumer products, all too often they are purchased as stand alone items. After all, the wide screen HDTV monitor one may be considering does bear a strong resemblance to the TV set of 10 years ago. Force of habit often provokes us to study the sales fliers in the Sunday papers and then make a trip to the department or electronics store to pick up the new 'set'.

The same goes for the stereo receiver and speakers – all bear a strong resemblance to products we have purchased in the past.

This tends to focus our attention on the individual components rather than the completed system when making purchasing decisions - and the experience at the retail store tends to reinforce this.

Because the retail industry has extensive overhead and competition, efficiency is the name of the game. They must move as much product as fast and easily as possible. That calls for standardization, which in turn lends itself to focusing on the individual, standardized product, not the interactions between individual components or the installation into the customer's home.

For example, it is common to hear a salesman quote specifications like 'total harmonic distortion' or 'watts per channel' when selling amplifiers or receivers. What they seldom mention however is that a good harmonic distortion spec can easily be outweighed by poor



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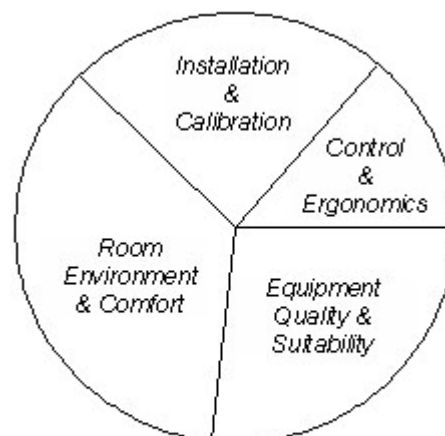
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speaker placement. Likewise a speaker's efficiency has at least as much to do with how loud the system will play as the 'watts per channel' specification. The retail environment's focus on individual products tends to ignore the importance of interactions between the components and the environment.

Similarly, an inordinate amount of retail sales attention is paid to the video part of the equation with less attention given to the audio components. The reason? Look at the average TV showroom. There's usually a wall of 50 sets all with the same picture on. At the same time there are 10 customers all in different stages of the buying process. That's very efficient from a sales perspective. Now how could a retailer, focused on volume sales recreate that efficiency with audio? They would have to have 50 sound proof rooms where audio systems could be auditioned without interference. Because of that impracticality, retailers focus on the video selection to the detriment of audio. Even a high end retailer that takes the time to sell audio properly still must surrender to the fact that the listeners room at home will have a very significant impact on the final experience.

Because audio is so hard to get right, it is often the weak link in the majority of home theater systems bought through retail stores. This flaw is so widespread that experiencing a home theater system where the audio has been set up based on the listening room can be a startling experience and one that has much more lasting impact than say, increasing the size of the viewing screen.

So while today's components are capable of producing an incredible, life like experience, their complexity requires that the interactions between the individual components and between the entire system and the listening environment be carefully considered. Furthermore, the cost of these systems demands that the time and care be taken to maximize their potential, especially when the installation and integration procedures have such a profound impact on the end result. A well planned, balanced investment will always include not only the equipment, but professional product selection, installation and calibration to the environment as well.



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