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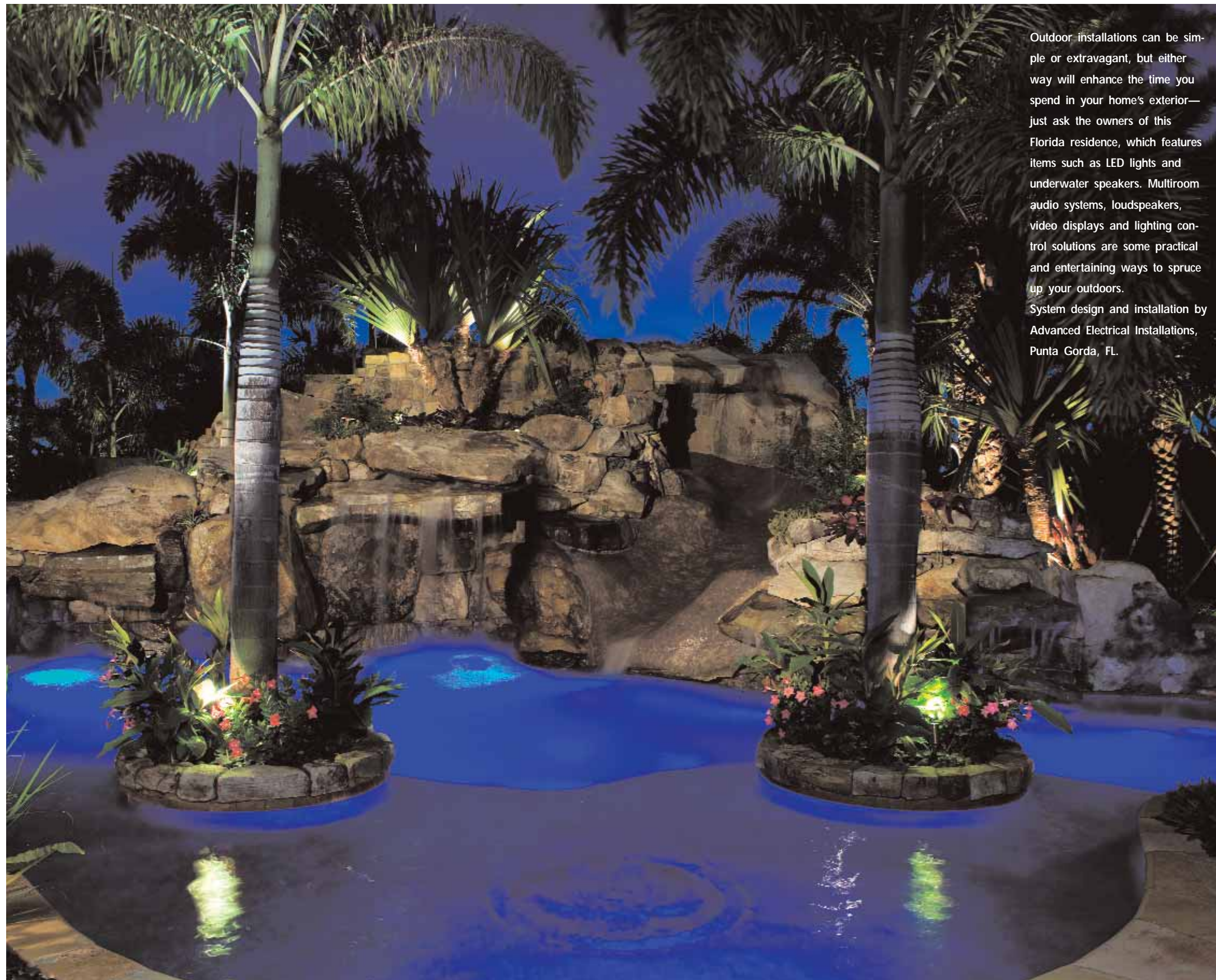
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# Inside OUT

Three killer outdoor systems break down the walls and break out of the home box. *by Arlen Schweiger*

An outdoor living room offers grill-side entertainment for adults and kids. A subterranean subwoofer and a slew of speakers—some underwater—make waves in a jammin' home water park. A Florida yard adds some south-of-the-border salsa with a rockin' swim up bar, kitchen hut and entertainment lanai. ■ Whether your backyard dreams include a high-tech water park or a simple pair of speakers to jazz up your patio, electronics can make your outdoor space bloom. Many homeowners are giving unused spaces a little TLC—and that includes the “wait till next year” backyard. The National Association of Home Builders' research found that outdoor remodeling work rose 31 percent in 2007. ■ You don't even have to see your high-tech outdoor goodies. They can blend into the landscape via rock-shaped or planter loudspeakers and low-profile lighting. Here are samples of three outdoor entertainment systems to whet your appetite.



Outdoor installations can be simple or extravagant, but either way will enhance the time you spend in your home's exterior—just ask the owners of this Florida residence, which features items such as LED lights and underwater speakers. Multiroom audio systems, loudspeakers, video displays and lighting control solutions are some practical and entertaining ways to spruce up your outdoors. System design and installation by Advanced Electrical Installations, Punta Gorda, FL.



### California Daydreamin'

Lounging by the fireplace and watching golf on the LCD screen above it, these Southern California homeowners might forget if they're indoors or out. They soak up the San Diego sun year-round, and they wanted the patio space to become more connected to the home's interior. It can be accessed via the family room or kitchen, and incorporates features from each. The result is a cozy area that earns its keep as an entertaining and relaxing escape.

The construction of the outdoor living room lent itself nicely to a surround-sound audio/video setup, says electronics installer Darryl Kuder of Red Dot Audio Video in Carlsbad, CA. Sonance Outdoor Extreme speakers were built into two soffits, with three in-wall models used for the front left, center and right channels, plus a pair of in-ceiling models for the rear surrounds. "Once we saw where they could go, it just ended up being perfect, and we knew they'd have fun with a surround system," Kuder says. "For an outdoor speaker, the quality you get out of it is just unbelievable, and we've used them outdoors many

Outdoor living rooms allow homeowners to enjoy the comforts of their interior while basking in warm weather and keeping an eye on the kids in the pool. These spaces can become virtually seamless in connecting your interior and exterior, as electronics gear stored inside can drive audio and video setups outside. In this southern California residence, Sonance surround-sound speakers were installed in the front wall and rear ceiling soffit, while an LG plasma was placed above the fireplace. Audio and video content is pulled from the equipment rack inside, but a Universal Remote Control MX-900 remote remains outside. System design and installation by Red Dot Audio Video, Carlsbad, CA.



Music to the Jacuzzi in this Florida home flows out of Sonance Mariner 61 speakers that were grouted at the time the stonework was constructed, so the weather-hardy speakers appear to be part of the wall. System design and installation by Advanced Electrical Installations, Punta Gorda, FL.

times, even on boats.”

The speakers came with paintable grilles, which were done in chocolate brown to complement the light olive stucco and dark wood ceiling beams. Two Sonance Mariner 62 speakers are located by the pool, where Red Dot also placed a Speco surveillance camera with a digital video recorder and remote viewing capabilities.

Below the front soffit is the traditional family room TV-over-fireplace. A 42-inch LG LCD flat panel hangs on a Chief articulating

wall mount, so whoever’s manning the bar-beque can swivel the TV to view. Though the space is well shaded, on particularly bright days the homeowners can close curtains flanking the fireplace to ensure a glare-free screen.

A Denon AVR-1708 surround-sound receiver hides behind the fireplace wall, and a Universal Remote Control MX-900 remote stays outside. The rest of the electronics remain safely inside, including an Onkyo 6-disc DVD/CD changer, cable box and karaoke machine—for that there are two wireless microphones that can be used outside during parties. For other musical selections, the family taps into its Elan whole-house audio system with the company’s Z100 keypad, and Elan volume controllers are in the outdoor living room as well as the pool area.

“We wanted comfort as well as visibility of the kids at play and in the pool,” says the man of the house. “The adults and kids can be entertained while enjoying each others’ company.”

### Water World

Music comes at you from everywhere in this watery wonderland just south of Sarasota, FL. Loudspeakers fire at a grotto and a Jacuzzi, around the tiki bar and by the pool. Four speakers are even in the pool. For good measure, there’s a subterranean subwoofer to keep the grounds thumping. Pool parties have never been this jammin’.

“The homeowners like to listen to music and they do a lot of entertaining. They wanted access to their entire system right out there,” says Zack Clark of Punta Gorda-based Advanced Electrical Installations (AEI).

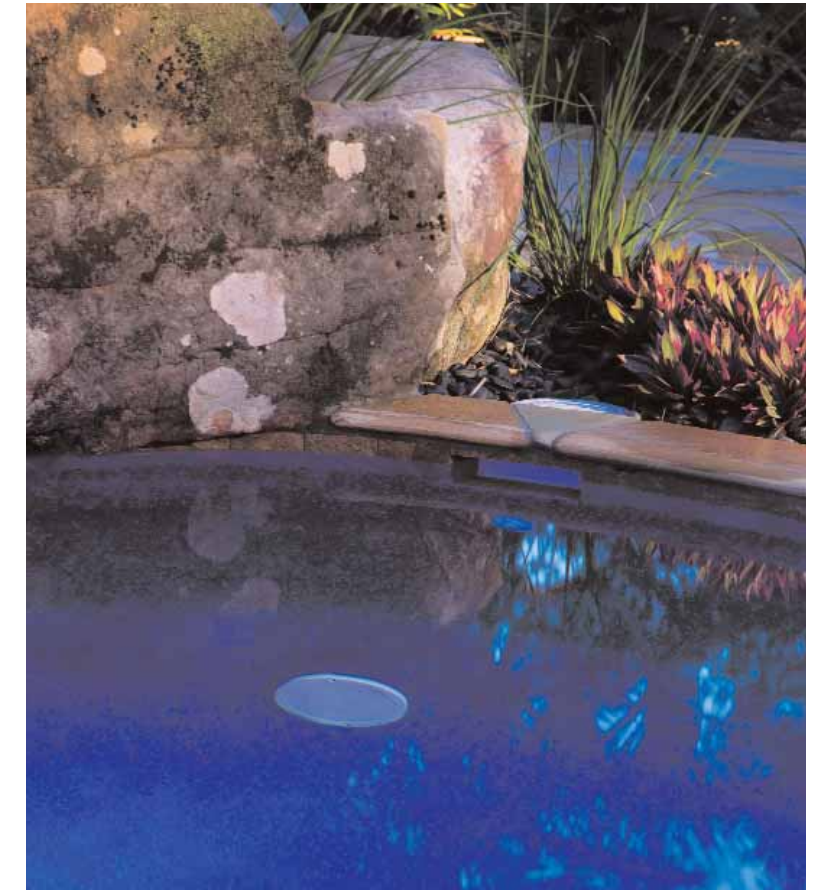
From above, three pairs of Sonance Mariner 63 speakers mounted to the side of the house point to the pool area. Two Sonance Symphony 621 in-ceiling speakers are mounted in the tiki bar, and two Mariner 61s deliver sound to the spa and grotto—one painted to match the rocks and the other grouted in place by the pool contractor while setting the stonework.



The lady of the house wanted to hear music while swimming laps, so AEI added four Oceanears SP-8 underwater speakers to the pool, driven by 2,000 watts from a Crown XTi 2000 amplifier. “You can stand next to the pool and hear it really clearly; it’s not muffled or distorted like you might expect from an underwater speaker,” Clark says. “Oceanears does most of the Olympic swimming pools’ underwater systems, so I figured if it’s good enough for them, it’s good enough for here.”

The homeowners can summon selections from their Elan distributed audio system—tunes from satellite radio, a dual AM/FM tuner or a music server—from a HomeLogic wireless tablet or either of the two RTI U1 waterproof remote controls. Audio was divided into three zones, so people hanging out on the pool lanai could listen to something different than what’s playing in the Jacuzzi area.

Music isn’t all that can be controlled. The



HomeLogic automation system commands seven color-changing LED (light emitting diode) fixtures, the Pentair pool equipment and any of the three waterfalls, plus eventually the landscape lighting. Six preset party scenes have been programmed to trigger LED settings, audio playlists and more. For example, one button can make the lights shift from emerald to pastel green and bright blue to baby blue in sync with certain songs.

More amusement may be in store for this water park, in the form of a projector beaming its image onto a specialized waterfall. We can only imagine their speaker setup for that.

### Home Resort

There’s little reason to bide your time indoors if you’re on a Mexican resort vacation. These Pensacola, FL–area homeowners already live on the Gulf of Mexico, and they decided to give their residence’s outdoor space some south-of-the-border flavor. That meant a sum-

A thorough assortment of speakers in this Florida backyard includes models in the grotto wall (left) and underwater along the sides of the swimming pool (right). Installing the Oceanears underwater speakers wasn’t much different than putting lights within the pool walls, says Advanced Electrical Installations’ Zack Clark. Audio in this outdoor space is divided into three zones so everyone can select favorites from the Elan multiroom system. System design and installation by Advanced Electrical Installations, Punta Gorda, FL.



Food served at the summer kitchen of this Florida panhandle home is served with smiles and songs, courtesy of SpeakerCraft speakers and an Elan distributed audio system. The mood is further enhanced by a Lutron HomeWorks lighting control system, whether it's a quiet evening or a pool party that's on the menu. System design and installation by All Pro Sound, Pensacola, FL.

mer kitchen, swim-up bar, lanai with a fireplace and a pool area that features a rock wall. "They were replicating a pool and bar they visited in Mexico. They wanted sound covering the entire outside area and two TVs built into the summer kitchen," says Blake Jochum of Pensacola electronics installation firm All Pro Sound. "They also wanted control of the music and the lighting system from the outside." The homeowners got that and more. The extensive outdoor area is illuminated by a Lutron HomeWorks automated lighting control system. Dinners or cocktails in the kitchen hut are reminders of the resort nightlife amid the glowing mood lighting, which can be controlled by a keypad stowed

out of sight in a technology drawer that All Pro Sound outfitted. The eight zones of outdoor lighting, as well as several other features, can even be operated from a cordless telephone, thanks to an Elan paging system incorporated into the space. The system includes paging, door communication and intercom features along with contact closure via the phone for power door locks, gate operation and lighting control. "A Wal-Mart phone will do. Elan's communication controller is what makes it special," Jochum says. An Elan HD system also provides the distributed audio and video for the 18,000-square-foot interior. In the backyard area, as well as the front portico, a range of



SpeakerCraft outdoor speakers was used. Rock speakers mix into the landscape by the pool, while flush-mounted speakers and outside surface-mounted speakers were also incorporated. The ceiling-mounted speaker in the kitchen hut was finished to match the wood grain there. Twin CRT televisions were mounted above the kitchen for viewing variety, but those have since been taken down after hurricanes blew through the area. For now,

the family and guests will settle for lively conversation and lively music outdoors. "It's really the gathering point of the house," the homeowner says. "There are all kinds of cooking options out there in the summer kitchen. We've definitely enjoyed the lighting and the music, and everything just flows together." A sleek weatherproof LCD TV for the hut might someday be in order, but no one at this mini-resort is complaining. **EH**

All Pro Sound outfitted a technology drawer (left) for the homeowners to provide them with convenient access to the audio and paging systems from Elan and the Lutron lighting system. Sound blends into the decor of the Mexican resort-type space in part through SpeakerCraft rock loudspeakers (below). System design and installation by All Pro Sound, Pensacola, FL.

### 3 COOL OPTIONS

**NILES AUDIO PS6SI PLANTER SPEAKER** Outdoor speakers that look like rocks are sweet, but if you have more of a green thumb, try planting some flora with your sound in this stereo speaker. [www.nilesaudio.com](http://www.nilesaudio.com)

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