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Tech Team

Forging a productive
builder/integrator alliance.

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Richard Rosano (left)
of RR Builders and
James Sweeney of
Hometronics Lifestyles.

Official
Publication of

TBX
TECHHOME BUILDER
CONFERENCE & EXPO

July/August 2007
www.techhomebuilder.com

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DESIGN CORNER

Truly Historic Model Home

Early decisions by Michelangelo Homes paid off in this award-winning demo space. *by Tom LeBlanc*



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACCENT ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS INTEGRATORS.

For this Parade of Homes entrant, the builder brought interior design elements in early so the integrator could blend the components with the overall look and create an automated demo that is easier for real estate agents to operate.

There is a right way to do a model home, according to Curt Rothenberg, vice president of Bonita Springs, Fla.-based Accent Electronic Systems Integrators. The right way, he says, is how Accent and Fort Myers, Fla.-based builder Michelangelo Homes collaborated on a Sanibel, Fla., 2007 Lee Building Industry Parade of Homes entrant.

No, he doesn't suggest that all model homes should have ancient-Egyptian-themed home theaters. There are elements of this home, however, that he says reflect the collaboration and forward-thinking necessary to create an award-winning model home that properly represents a builder.

One-button on/off. It's a model home, meaning it will mostly be empty except during those times when a Realtor is showing it to prospective buyers. It's also a "total smart home," according to Rothenberg, and rather than have the Realtor fum-

ble around with buttons in order to turn components on and off, there should be a one-button "on" mode for when they enter and a one-button "off" mode for when they exit.

Early collaboration. The home site was still a lot full of dirt when Rothenberg first sat down with Walt Hogan, president of Michelangelo Homes, and Sabrina Leahman, designer for Michelangelo Homes. Getting on the same page early helped bring the elaborate Egyptian-themed home theater to fruition.

Getting visual. Rothenberg was impressed that the folks at Michelangelo Homes purchased many of the interior design elements of the project early. "This allowed us not only to create the Egyptian-themed space, but to camouflage the equipment," he says. For instance, Rothenberg saw that the chest (shown under the screen) could be used to hide a Velodyne Acoustics subwoofer. **THB**