



Small space, big entertainment

TECHNOLOGY

Home theatre options for condos go Ultra HD, wireless



CONDO TRENDS

Duncan McAllister

For many new condo owners, a decent entertainment system is not an option; it's a must-have amenity. For those of you who want to deck out your suite with the latest audio-visual technology, there are many options tailored for small-space environments.

As living spaces are getting smaller, so are home entertainment systems. Gone are the days of massive speaker cabinets and hefty power amplifiers. Space-saving audiophile-grade sound systems have gone mini and wireless.

The most popular components for condos this year include Ultra High Definition 4K televisions, wireless streaming soundbars and subwoofers. Ultra-HD ramps up the resolution, colour and contrast of TVs well beyond that of HD and regular 4K. Systems from Sony and Samsung range in size from 40" to a mammoth 85".

Developers are now offering condo wiring packages as an option, which includes built-in cabling for in-wall speakers, video and computer networking, and outlets in every room. For those without flexible cabling options, wireless is the way to go. It allows flexibility and growth in a



A typical condo living room scenario featuring a Sony Bravia Ultra-HD 4K television and Sonos wireless audio system.

DUNCAN MCALLISTER/FOR METRO

A Sony 43" 4K Ultra High Definition TV. These smart sets have Android and wireless streaming built-in. They're thin and lightweight and resemble a picture frame.

THE SONY STORE



The Sonos PLAYBAR is a self-contained, wireless sound system that sits underneath your flat-panel TV. It communicates wirelessly with other Sonos components and even streams Internet music. SONOS

condo environment.

Chris Rose is a technical specialist at Toronto's Bay Bloor Radio. The popular Yorkville showroom is a veritable wonderland of best-in-class audio visual products. Smack-dab in the middle of the Yonge-Bay condo alley, it's no surprise that many of their customers are highrise dwellers.

"TV is still the primary source of entertainment to this day," says Rose.

"Condo owners want a combination unit that not only does sound from the TV, but also gives them the ability of entertaining and streaming music." Almost all sound systems and smart TVs today are wireless and have the ability to stream content from the Internet.

Sonos is a leader in wireless sound technology. Their modular systems and components network wirelessly together. Rose calls it "electronic Lego."

A good, three-component Sonos system would adequately cover a one-bedroom condo, giving flexibility for future expansion, he says. The Sonos PLAYBAR television soundbar with streaming music and a SUB wireless subwoofer round out the living-room entertainment system and a PLAY:1 compact wireless speaker serves as the bedroom system.

"The new smart TVs now have 4K streaming from Netflix, so you get to see far higher resolutions than what we've ever seen in the past," says Rose.

"And they're very easy to use with an application on the iPhone or an Android device. It's not complicated to set these things up anymore."