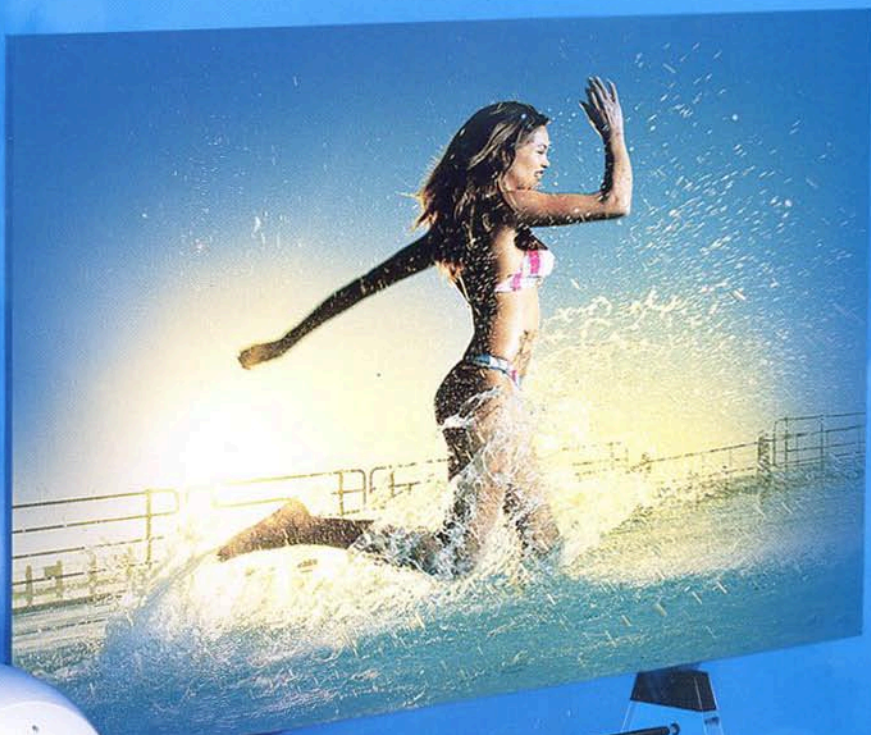


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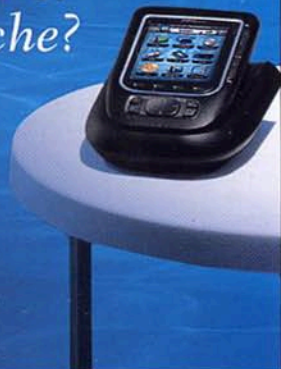
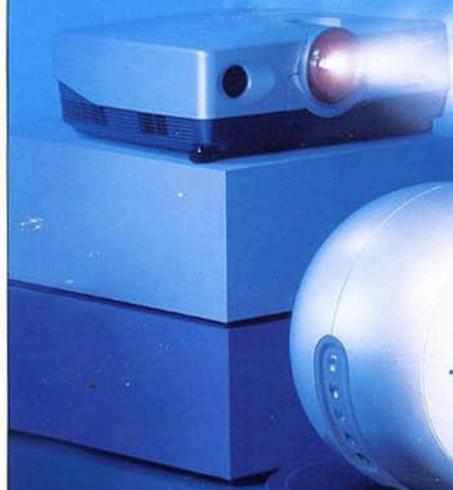
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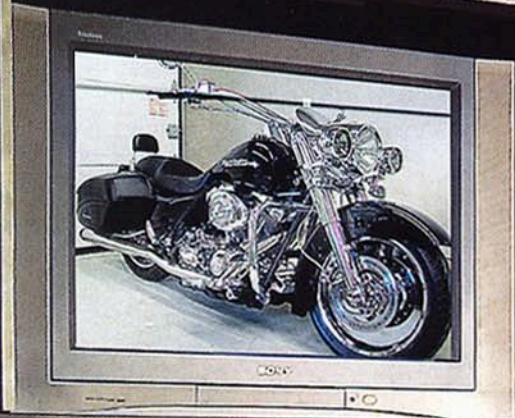
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HOME PORTFOLIO

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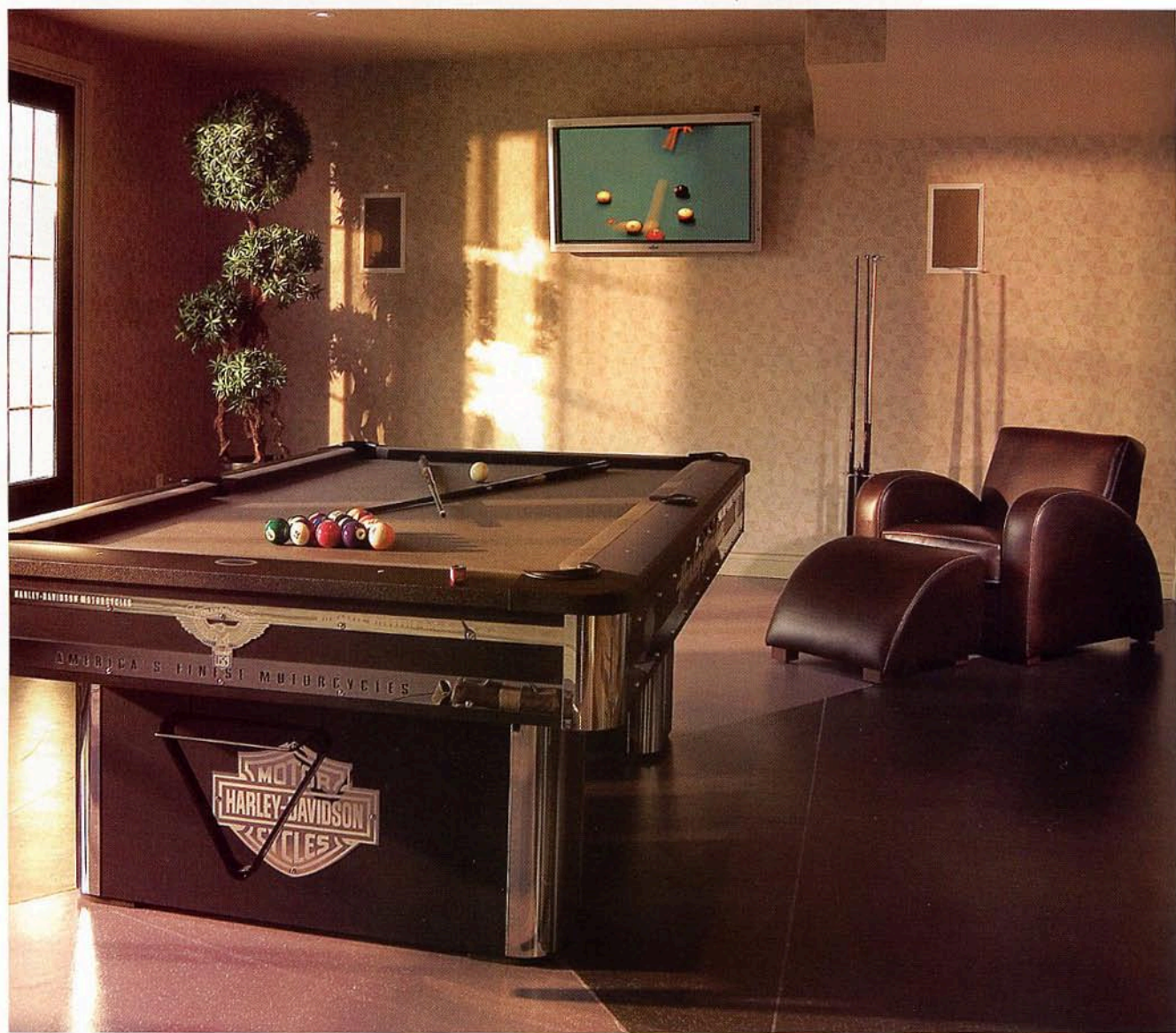
A passion for all things Harley-Davidson—and all things high tech—fuels the design of a wealthy Ontario entrepreneur's entertainment zone and home.

By JEAN PENN PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN TRIGIANI



This is a guy's pad—all 4,800 square feet of it—from the hog-wild sports bar and billiard room to the street-level garage equipped with outdoor speakers, two Sony Wega televisions, and a Crestron CT-1000 touchscreen control panel. The home's owner, 38-year-old Dino Valentini, openly admits his obsession with motorcycles, challenges, wine, food, and the luxury of being able to control everything in his home with the press of a button.

Did we mention he likes action and change? This is Valentini's fifth home.



The decor of the entertainment zone is pure Harley, from the insignias on the pool table to those on the wall. Another wall features black-and-white scenics of motorcycles in action. The textured wallpaper of the billiard room adds to the theme of motion.

Nestled in St. Catharines, Ontario, the home is near Niagara Falls and Canada's major wine growing region. Not surprisingly, the area is known for its numerous scenic road trip opportunities.

But Valentini isn't solely focused on play at the moment. In addition to running his asset recovery business, VDC Canada, he is contemplating another home—an 8,000-square-foot residence nestled on a three-acre plot surrounded by 22 rolling acres of countryside. "I lose interest very quickly," he says of his appetite for motion.

Interior designer Laura Swallow helped Valentini communicate his restless spirit with a clean, contemporary, and

comfortably designed environment that is "relaxing without being too soothing and passive."

Movement, the designer says, is the main theme of the home's decor. Even the bar stools move up and down with the help of hydraulic lifts. Anthony Lobo and Jeremy Arding, owners of Definitive Sound of Mississauga just outside of Toronto, handled the audiovisual installation. Says Valentini: "I am a real techie and I did more in-depth home automation than ever before with this house."

St. Catharines is bound by winding roads that rise and descend the cliffs of Niagara Escarpment. Riders can take in the fruit tree orchards and mile after mile of grapevines.



The minimalist family room is where Valentini loves to spend most of his time. The maple floor, which is prevalent throughout the first floor, adds warmth to the masculine design. The bezel of the 64-inch rear-projection Pioneer CRT TV is zebrawood. The screen can slide to the side so the custom installer can access the 4-foot space that houses the cables for upgrades and repairs.

Valentini, who makes his own wine, has been collecting and riding motorcycles for three years and owns two customized Harley-Davidsons—a Road King and a Softail. Before hitting the road for a scenic outing, Valentini and his biker friends gather in his garage. “We can clean our bikes and watch movies on my Sony Wega.”

The garage, as well as most of the house, is wired into the whole-house automation system. When he wants to access his MP3 collection, he can call up his favorite music—organized by genre, artist, album, and playlists—on the touchscreen, TV, or two-way remote controls. If Valentini is in the mood to watch a movie, he simply selects a DVD

jacket—which is also displayed on the touchscreen or TV—from his vast collection. And if he and his friends desire a fancy coffee or a glass of vino, the espresso machine and wine collection are nearby.

Valentini makes good use of the 18-foot bar with his friends as they cheer on their favorite football and hockey teams. “When I am downstairs, the entire house can be controlled with a wireless system,” he says. “When I’m watching TV and the doorbell rings, I see the person at the door on the screen. The phone will then ring and I pick it up and talk to them. If it’s someone I don’t want to talk to, I don’t have to answer the phone.”



From top: Valentini likes to cook for his friends, and the kitchen—furnished with granite counters, espresso-stained cabinetry, and industrial-quality Viking appliances—is roomy enough for a few sous chefs and a small audience. The dining room is the scene for many wine-tasting parties. The space revolves around an expandable espresso-stained maple table. Dark brown, cappuccino, and golden tones used throughout the home are mirrored in a painting of a brownstone. The café au lait-colored walls are finished in a treatment that suggests cashmere.



Swallow, who has worked with Valentini on other projects, spent a lot of time researching Harleys before designing the basement's entertainment zone. "He has a lot of vision about living space—he will look at things and is willing to take more steps forward than a lot of people," Swallow says. "He's more of a risk-taker, adventurous, and not shy of saying, 'I like it, but can you take it farther?'"

With the experience of building two custom homes under his belt, Valentini knows what he wants and is more than willing to roll up his sleeves to get it. The stucco and brick home has a bungalow-ranch style with a split-level layout and a loft. With the help of a contractor, he embellished on a layout he found in a book of floor plans. "I photocopied all of them, customizing the way I wanted it to look—removing walls, changing ceilings, adding skylights, and so on. I liked the basic plan, but kept adding as I was going." He is not afraid to admit that he changed his mind about materials and layout frequently. "You get a wall up and you don't like where it is or the room is too small or big and it has to come down," he says. "It's hard to look at a plan and visualize what it's like, although I think I've gotten better after this project."

"Throughout the house, the concept was to intermix different textures to achieve a feeling of movement. Everything was clean-lined, but it also had to be appealing."

—Laura Swallow,
interior designer



Not surprisingly, the homeowner created a very long and specific technological checklist for Definitive Sound, mandating that the audio and video systems had to be extremely high-performance. He also wanted to control the house's heating and cooling, lighting, multiroom audio distribution, security, and home theater system with one simple keypad. "I wanted to walk into the house and shut the alarm off and at the same time turn on the lights in the bedroom and adjust various mood settings in the house. Along with turning on a series of lights in predetermined values, I can turn on soft jazz."

Definitive Sound arrived on the scene after the home's drywall and wiring were already installed. "This is a dilemma many homeowners face," says custom installer Anthony Lobo, who worked in tandem with business partner Jeremy Arding. "The walls are up before homeowners realize the importance of audio and video in their life. Luckily, Creston came out with a new lighting product that solved the problem just in the nick of time."



"The homeowner loves to come home after a hectic day and have so many entertainment options at his disposal. We were glad to turn his technology dreams into reality."

—Anthony Lobo, custom installer (shown right with partner Jeremy Arding)