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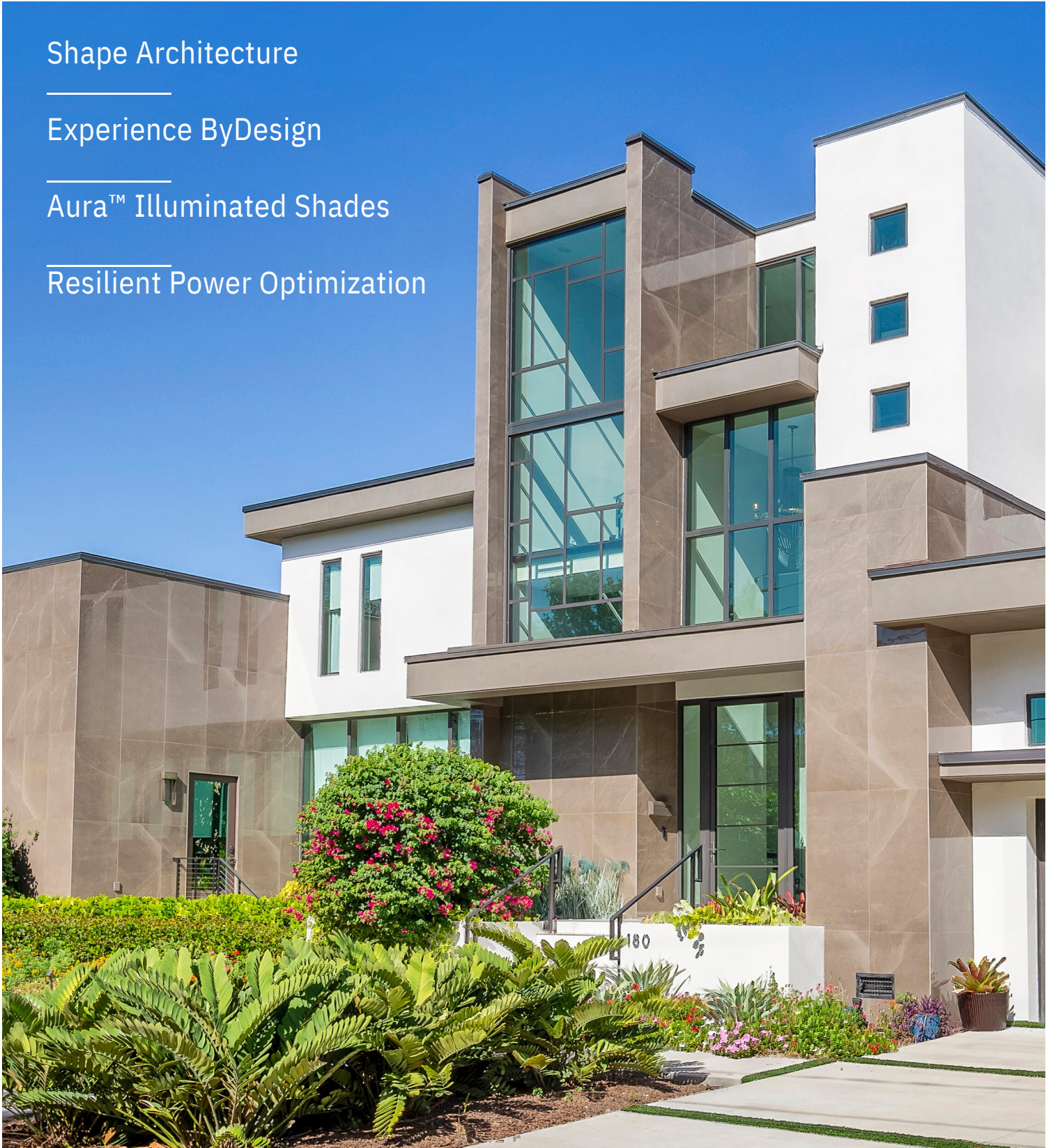
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A Modern Vision, Realized

BY KRISSY RUSHING TOMLIN

THE STUNNING TAMPA, FLORIDA HOME featured on these pages was designed by the late Thomas Everett Lamb, Owner of Thomas Everett Lamb Design and Development, Inc. Lamb's firm offered luxury custom interior design services, and Lamb's talents made him one of the most sought-after designers in the country. In 2019, tragedy struck when Lamb died from COVID.

"He was known as one of Tampa's finest design-build professionals," says Brent Hebert, President of Galen Homes by Sabal Construction, a veteran-owned and -operated luxury custom home builder in the Greater Tampa Bay Area. As the builder on the project, Brent was able to honor and complete the lauded designer's original vision.

Part of the plan was lifestyle-enhancing smart home technology. To accomplish it, he needed an excellent, professional

home technology integrator in the area, and was referred to Integral Home Technology out of Clearwater, Florida.

I sat down with Brent and Integral's Project Manager, Spencer Heckman, to chat about the project and how the technology and architecture harmonize to produce a result that would make Lamb proud while enabling a luxurious, safe, beautiful and entertaining lifestyle for the homeowners.

KRISSY: Brent, tell me a little bit about your business.

BRENT: We're primarily in the Greater Tampa Bay Area and most of our houses are luxury custom homes — new builds and remodels — on the waterfront. Every house we do is unique. Our clients are mixed residential and commercial. Most of them are corporation owners or wealthy individuals, so we do commercial projects for their offices in addition to

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BRENT HEBERT
PRESIDENT, GALEN HOMES



SPENCER HECKMAN
PROJECT MANAGER,
INTEGRAL
HOME TECHNOLOGY

their homes. But the majority of our business is high-end luxury residential.

KRISSY: Tell me how you found Integral Home Technology and how that relationship developed.

BRENT: They were referred to us by another peer in the industry. This was our first project working with them, and everything was perfect. They did such a great job that we have brought them in on three other projects since then. They are very, very good at what they do.

KRISSY: Spencer, your turn. Tell us about Integral Home Technology and your role.

SPENCER: We do luxury smart homes in the Greater Tampa Bay Area. The team at Integral Home Technology builds truly custom systems for luxury homes and businesses. Because the world of technology is always changing, we pride ourselves on being a trusted and go-to technology partner not only for homeowners, but also for designers, builders and architects. I am a Project Manager for Integral, so I'm usually the one to interface with homeowners on the technology out in the field.

KRISSY: How long did it take to build the house?

BRENT: About three years, with COVID slowing the process down. It should have been about a two-year build. Material



SAMSUNG FRAME TV WITH A CUSTOM LEON FRAMEBAR AND CONTROL4 CONTROLLER



availability was horrible. It was really hard to get a lot of supplies we needed. Our Project Manager Jason Jackson was incredible at coordinating it all.

KRISSY: Brent, what has your impression been of home technology integrators as a builder?

BRENT: Some are better than others. It depends on their ability to listen to the client and General Contractor to achieve what the client wants. Integral is great because they're a smaller company. I also work with some of the larger home tech companies in the area that do the same types of jobs. Many of them are more focused on sales than they are on the actual implementation of the technology. They sell a great product, but then the implementation stage is not good. Integral seems to have the whole package together.

KRISSY: Spencer, what was it that the homeowners were looking for?

SPENCER: They wanted the technology to be easy to use and beautiful, without a lot of visible cables. The challenge

was giving them the best experience with the technology without seeing it, as well as integrating everything from lighting control to audio to landscape lighting into one cohesive interface. We executed this by keeping it simple and high quality.

KRISSY: Tell us about all the different media systems throughout.

SPENCER: There are four TVs throughout the home. The family room has a 5.1 surround sound system with an in-ceiling subwoofer and a Samsung Frame TV with a custom Leon FrameBar for great audio that's also high design.

The client has a stunning penthouse with full glass walls. To keep the technology minimal, we mounted the TV to the ceiling instead of the walls and installed in-ceiling speakers to avoid obstructing the waterfront views.

Indoor and outdoor audio was also implemented throughout the home with Sonance and Origin Acoustics in-ceiling speakers. We gave extensive consideration to outdoor



lighting, working both with Brent's team and the landscape designer to create a beautiful, functional, and safe outdoor living space. A Control4 home automation system controls it all. Before this, the homeowners didn't have a smart home, so they pulled out all the stops.

KRISSY: Tell me about the timeline, when did the technology part of the picture come into play?

BRENT: It was in the last quarter of the project, and that's when we usually involve integrators, before the drywall stage. This way they can run their prewiring location devices. Everything else gets set up later after drywall. Then, they don't come back until the very end when they're trimming out the system during the last 10 percent of the project.

KRISSY: Spencer, you can chime in here? Isn't it more desirable for an integrator to be brought on at the blueprint stage?

SPENCER: It is if the clients and builder aren't familiar with the products or know what the technology specification is going to be and need help planning it. We always prefer to

be brought on during the earliest stages of planning to provide insight and avoid changes needed down the line that might arise. However, we are brought on in all stages of the project and we always make it work no matter what stage.

KRISSY: Brent, tell me how this home is unique from a design perspective.

BRENT: The house is very unique and was a challenge to build. A typical home is a square. So the second floor sits exactly on top of the first floor and so forth. It's all supported by the same structural elements.

This modern house, however, has different geometry where every level is offset from the one before it. We had to install a large structural steel package to support those upper levels and open terraces and offset rooms. The three-story atrium when you first walk in, that's a real eye-catcher. It was fun. We had 70 subcontractors on this project.

KRISSY: Wow! That must have been like herding cats.

BRENT: There were so many specialty items and each one



came with their own trade. We have elevators, specialty lighting, specialty blinds, specialty everything.

KRISSY: Was there anything in particular that the homeowners wanted to see in their new home?

BRENT: Yes, the outdoor terraces. They had to have those because they love to entertain on the third floor. There's a completely glassed-in room, which has some HVAC equipment hidden in it, but it's mainly a TV entertainment area. From there you can see the entire city skyline from downtown Bayshore Boulevard. There's a terrace off of that space that the homeowners love.

KRISSY: Was there any particular part of the project where the technology was an issue or you had to come up with a creative solution?

BRENT: From a build perspective, one of the more difficult pieces was the Level Five drywall finish and paint. With the massive amount of natural light in this home (there are floor-to-ceiling windows everywhere) getting the paint-finish perfect was a trial.

There were some challenges, such as lighting the cast-in-place concrete stairs. With integrated lighting, we had to custom-build the stairs and had to have Integral onsite while we were pouring concrete to make sure that lighting conduits stayed in the right place.

SPENCER: The landscape lighting was indeed a really big aspect of the technology, from landscape lighting to hardscape to step lighting. All those conduits needed to be perfectly aligned, and the coordination between us and Brent's team was great.

The other big challenge was installing the exterior Control4 doorbell. The doorbell needed to be installed through a brick wall and cleanly trimmed. No mistakes were allowed as we couldn't crack the tile!

Outside of that, it was also hard to hide everything in this open space, such as Wi-Fi access points and security cam-

eras. In the end, the design of the home is very aesthetically pleasing and we were able to accomplish it all without taking away from the original vision.

KRISSY: How did you overcome the Wi-Fi access point problem?

SPENCER: We worked closely with Brent's team to understand what the soffit was going to look like in the kitchen. We needed access points and speakers above the island. Talking it through to know the building construction was key to getting everything up there and looking nice.

KRISSY: Brent, is there anything about the design of this home that you were especially excited about or proud of?

BRENT: For me, it was the custom glass design we did on the front of the house with the windows. In the stairway area, there are two stories of continuous glass on which we applied Muntins, an aluminum product attached to glass, to provide a design that made the window an art piece. We worked with the manufacturer and the client to produce it.

KRISSY: Do you have any advice for potential homeowners or other builders when working on a high-performance high-tech home?

BRENT: I guess my advice would be whether you're a General Contractor or an integrator or a customer, do your research on the equipment so that you understand the possibilities of what's out there before you try to make a final decision. Having a clear idea of what is possible will help determine what you want to achieve and will streamline the design process.

SPENCER: I agree. Also, it's important to vet your integrator, or, better yet, find an HTA Certified integrator in your area. The process of getting HTA Certified is rigorous, done by a third party — The Home Technology Association. They do things like background and reference checks, make sure you carry the appropriate amount of insurance, and even talk to other trades about the quality of your work. We are HTA Certified at the Luxury level. Not many other integrators can say that in our area, so we are very proud of that.

