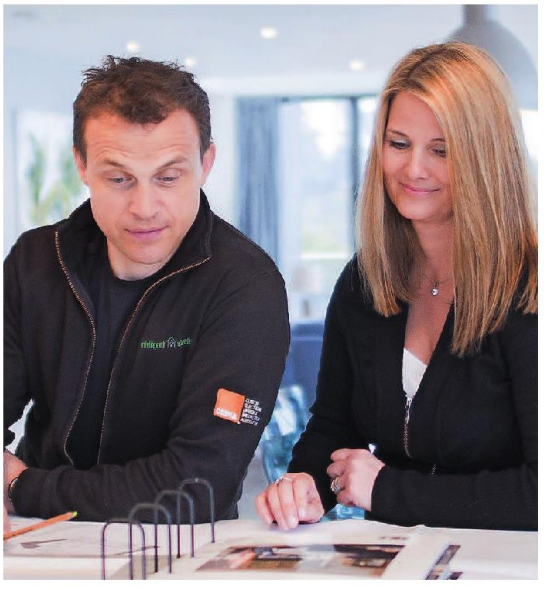
THE SMART APPROACH

FOR OVER A DECADE, INTELLIGENT ABODES HAVE LED THE WAY WHEN IT COMES TO TECHNOLOGY IN THE HOME – AND, SAYS CO-FOUNDER **KAREN CHUGG**, THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS



TIM AND KAREN CHUGG; LIGHTING CONTROL IS KEY IN 2020

ROBOTS MAY NOT have taken over the world just yet, but they certainly have their feet under the table inside the home. Need to prepare your heating before leaving work for home? No problem. Want to dim the lights and bring down blinds in preparation for movie night, without lifting yourself out of the sofa? Job done. Not sure what the weather will be like tomorrow? Simply ask.

The world of technology never sits still and it seems as if the home has been one of the main beneficiaries. Karen Chugg is perfectly placed to explain why, having founded Intelligent Abodes in 2008 with her husband Tim. "Working in the smart home technology world, the greatest changes have been sophistication and integration," she says on what's evolved over the past decade. "Companies are collaborating, enabling products to work together for seamless control of your home. For example, lighting control and security systems can be linked, so unwelcome intruders will be met with lights coming on in the house and then outside, giving the appearance that there is someone at home."

Security is undoubtedly a key offering from the Exeter-based business, but it's not the top pick for Intelligent Abodes' clients. "Lighting and automated blinds/curtains are the most popular," Karen explains. "We give much more consideration to the lighting in our homes, designing it to suit the use of a room, and lighting control allows clients to change the lighting to suit the task. This is particularly useful in multi-functional family spaces where we cook, dine, relax, entertain, and watch TV – and we want the lighting to adjust instantly to suit what we are doing.

"The automated blinds have become popular due to the functionality," she continues. "Materials are designed to manage heat, glare and protect our precious belongings from the damaging effects of the sun. Many homes have a greater amount of windows to make the most of the beautiful views, so having blinds that automatically open/close to suit the weather conditions has proved very desirable and, of course, very useful for security too."

Many will consider the mod-cons of 21st century living when it comes to smart technology – is there a more luxurious use of a room than for your own mini cinema? "We all have our guilty pleasures," laughs Karen. "A home cinema can be a well planned TV room or a dedicated space for a sophisticated projector with full Dolby Atmos sound. I think most would agree that creating a room with high quality viewing and sound is a great way to relax and socialise, so it is very much worth the investment."

What's clear is that Intelligent Abodes' use of technology can work in all manner of homes and buildings. "We have been fortunate to work on some great local projects over the years," Karen says on their South West portfolio, "including the boutique hotel, Lympstone Manor, owned by Michael Caines OBE, where we focused on enhancing the experience of the hotel with lighting and music. More recently, we have worked on two homes where the focus has been on the use of smart technology to create a forever home, adapted to suit changing needs with age, so clients don't have to face moving later in life. We have also been able to adapt the home to help people with macular degeneration, motor neurone disease and wheelchair users. Most people include technology for convenience, safety and fun – but this aspect of the work shows how smart control can make a real difference to people's lives."

—*intelligentabodes.co.uk*