

The futuristic life of popular 1960s television cartoon *The Jetsons* has arrived on our doorstep and a bounty of wondrous hi-tech gadgetry is available for your enjoyment and comfort now, writes **Paula Shearer**

DAMIAN Cavanagh cues *Toy Story 2* on his 3.5m fabric cinema screen.

A starlit universe appears and my chair moves in a wave motion, swaying me through the galaxy.

Abruptly the tempo changes. Buzz Lightyear is speeding towards Emperor Zurg's planet and it seems as if I'm actually accelerating through his flight path.

My chair lurches forward. It vibrates to the action sequence then jolts me to a halt as Buzz comes in for a rough landing.

I think I've just been to infinity – and beyond!

This is the kind of movie magic you usually only experience in those fantasy lands such as Warner Bros. Movie World on the Gold Coast and Universal Studios in Hollywood.

But I'm sitting in a warehouse in Virginia, on Brisbane's northside. And this kind of set-up is now available at home – providing, that is, you have deep pockets. The D-Box chair I'm reclining in costs a tidy \$14,000. Still, if you can afford one, then money probably isn't too big a deal and you might as well buy one for every member of your family.

Cavanagh, who founded Electronic Living with wife Anissa in 2007, often installs several of the chairs in upmarket home theatres. He has also created one home set-up in southeast Queensland compete with eight D-Box chairs. Who needs Gold Class cinema when you can invite your friends home for this 4D screening?

Cavanagh has fetched his copy of *Toy Story 2* not from the typical DVD shelf of family favourites, but through a server located in the tower control system at Electronic Living's new multimillion-dollar showroom.

Buzz is stored along with the rest of Electronic Living's extensive movie collection on the Kaleidescape System.

A mind-blowing system, Kaleidescape stores copies of your Blu-ray and DVD movies plus your CD collection, then presents them with an incredible interactive menu interface you can control with your iPad.

Search through your entire collection – showcased with the original cover art – for a movie, a scene, a character or plot lines. Want to watch Dorothy sing *Over the Rainbow* from *The Wizard of Oz*? Ask and she will magically appear.

Cavanagh says all home entertainment is moving towards being server based. Instead of going to the shops or a DVD rental store, you can simply buy or rent your music and movies online. Cavanagh doesn't need a DVD player or a pay TV device – everything is operated through the control tower.

"TV shows, movies, music – the whole lot is available," he says. "The old disc is gone. It's just what movie you want to watch – select it, debit your credit card and it's streamed immediately into your lounge."

Also disappearing are towering, exposed speakers. At Cavanagh's showroom, the side walls and anamorphic cinema screen have been backlit to "show the client the engineering that goes on in there".

"Although there's a lot of speakers, you



ELECTRIC

don't see anything; it's a nice space," he says. "With speakers now you've got all these options. You can go flush mount, you can go flush mount invisible, wall mount, standard-looking conventional speakers or concealed speakers behind screens – so there's a solution for everybody."

"The trend now with homes is people don't want to see clutter. They don't like cables, they don't like boxes, so everything is hidden."

Among the hidden options for homes now are television screens that can be concealed behind glass or mirrors. So watching the morning news screened through your bathroom mirror while you are shaving or putting on your make-up is definitely an option.

As is controlling your entire house through an iPad app that will let you

adjust any electronic setting you choose – from switching on the lights to adjusting the airconditioning and turning on the music.

It might be 50 years since *The Jetsons* introduced us to the idea of running our homes at the push of a button and employing a robot maid to clean up, but this reality has arrived much sooner than the 2062 era in which the TV cartoon series was set.

And vacuum cleaning company Robomaid Australia says we are now ready for robots at home. In a recent survey of householders, Robomaid found 75 per cent of Queenslanders would buy a robotic cleaner or hire a cleaner if it meant they never had to vacuum again.

Nearly a quarter of people in Queensland say robots are the way of the future and they can't wait for

them to do all the chores, while almost a third think a robot can do a better job than a person in every household chore.

Robomaid found that 47 per cent of Australians are ready to welcome robots into their homes, with 25 per cent saying Rosie from *The Jetsons* would be their first choice. R2D2 from *Star Wars* (12 per cent) was also a favourite, followed by Disney's Wall-E (8 per cent) and Optimus Prime from *Transformers* (6 per cent).

National marketing manager Emma Hodge says there's been a gradual shift towards robotic cleaners as a viable alternative for homes.

"We've definitely seen a positive shift in attitudes towards robots and robotic cleaners," Hodge says. "Robots are an efficient solution for time-poor Australians and I think



shop.travel.relax



DREAMS

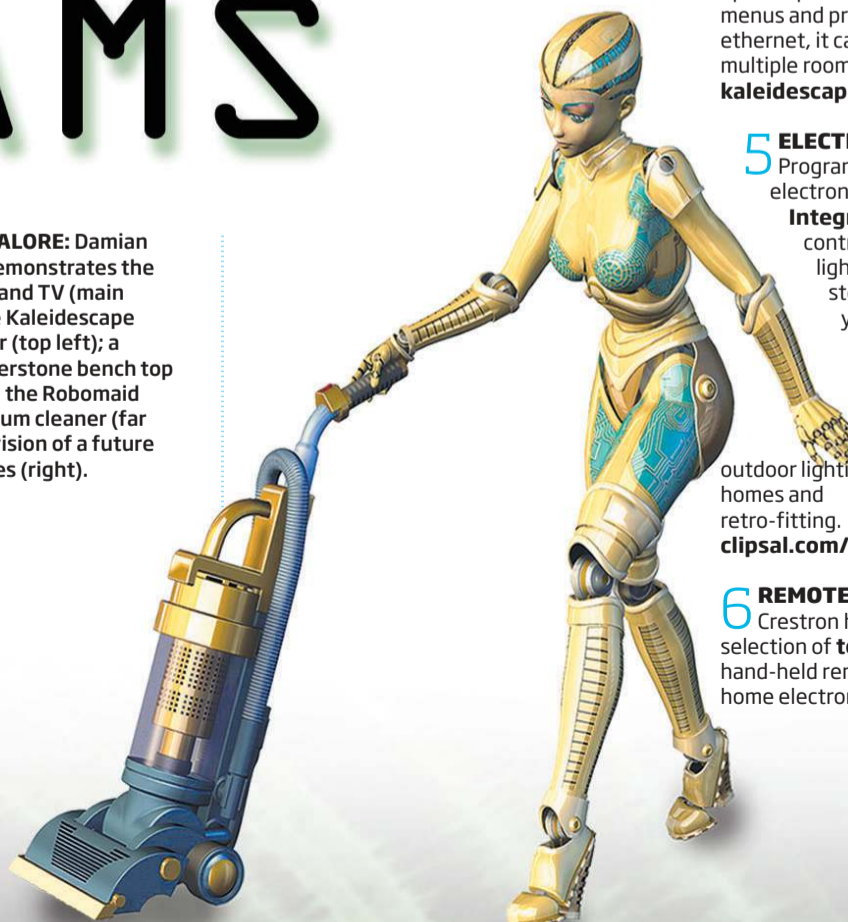
we're finally starting to embrace that along with the rest of the world."

Cavanagh says that, much like *The Jetsons*, it's already possible to run homes through a touch panel, which can be installed in a wall or placed in a docking station. There are also remote controls and iPad and iPhone apps. He cites the rollout of the National Broadband Network as a catalyst for greater mainstream adoption of an electronic lifestyle.

"Once we've got internet bandwidth it's going to open up Pandora's box. At the moment we have so much content we are trying to deliver down a small network.

"Once we have an unlimited network, we can put so much more down through it. So people will become much more accustomed to being able to access all this stuff."

GADGETS GALORE: Damian Cavanagh demonstrates the ad notam brand TV (main picture); the Kaleidescape movie server (top left); a backlit Caesarstone bench top (above left); the Robomaid robotic vacuum cleaner (far left); and a vision of a future free of chores (right).



1 AUTOMATION

The "brain" behind home automation is a **tower control system**, usually hidden in a cupboard or storeroom. Systems such as Crestron's 2-Series include powerful processors and encryption measures to allow operation from anywhere in the world. Add-ons include video distribution switchers, AM/FM tuners, and intercom and phone interfaces.

crestron.com

2 MULTI-ROOM MUSIC SYSTEM

Play your iTunes library, listen to more than 100,000 radio stations worldwide and stream millions of songs from the internet to every room of your home with the **Sonos Multi-Room Music System** - all without a computer. Search for songs, browse your collection and control the volume from anywhere using an iPhone or iPad.

playback.com.au

3 MAGIC MIRROR

The **Mirror Image** line combines an ad notam brand flush-fitted TV monitor with a glass or mirror surface. The TV sits behind the glass or mirror, becoming invisible when switched off. Some models have been engineered to operate in humid bathroom conditions while monitors installed in the kitchen are protected from dust and grime.

ad-notam.com

4 VIRTUAL LIBRARY

Convert your Blu-ray, DVD and CD collection to **The Kaleidescape System**, which stores the content on a home server. User functions include detailed indexing and sorting options plus the ability to skip menus and previews. Using ethernet, it can be connected to multiple rooms in the home.

kaleidescape.com

5 ELECTRICAL NETWORK

Program your home electronics with **Clipsal Integrated Systems** to control security systems, lights, airconditioning, stereo, the TV and even your coffee machine remotely. The system can also work with your pool and spa pumps, garden sprinklers and outdoor lighting. Available for new homes and retro-fitting.

clipsal.com/cis

6 REMOTE CONTROL

Crestron has created a wide selection of **touchpanels** and hand-held remotes to control your home electronics. The TPS-6X

THE TOP 10

SUPER-DUPER HI-TECH GADGETS FOR YOUR HOME

touchpanel can rest on its docking station or be used as a high-powered wireless device. Another option is the Isys wall-mount touchpanel available in several screen sizes.

crestron.com

7 AUTOMATED WINDOW COVERINGS

These can be controlled remotely, connected to your home automation system or sensor operated by sunlight. Verosol offers remote control across its range of blinds. In addition to making life easier, it also removes the hazard of cords in rooms accessed by children.

verosol.com.au

8 CONCEALED SOUND

Home theatre has stepped closer to Hollywood with **hidden sound systems** that can operate through the wall or ceiling. Systems can be plastered over during construction or mounted behind material screens similar in quality to those used by commercial cinemas.

sonance.com

9 RAZZLE DAZZLE

Turn your kitchen into a nightclub with a **backlit Caesarstone bench top**. The semi-precious stone collection is naturally translucent, so it can be installed with concealed lighting. Switch on the lights and sparkling gemstones will greet your guests.

caesarstone.com.au

10 ROBOT MAID

Keep your house looking clean with the help of a **Robomaid robotic vacuum cleaner**. It's bagless, vacuums any type of floor and will climb any surface - automatically adjusting from carpet to tiles, timber and even slate. Independently making its way from room to room, the Robomaid will automatically return to the docking station when it's low on power.

robomaid.com.au