



International Smart House's resident installation expert, MATTHEW ROLLIN, meets up with lighting control specialists Futronix and finds a company with a lot to shout about...

SCENE SETTER

In a world seemingly long ago and far away, there was a time when your parents actually had to rouse themselves from the comfort of their easy chairs to change the TV channel or adjust the volume – manually – maybe twenty times a night. Then, along came the marvelous remote handset – possibly one of the most appreciated technologies ever – to allow us to stay comfortably where we were and let our fingers do the walking.

In fact, the simple handheld remote control is one of technology's finest creations, already firmly established as a favorite interface between homeowners and our labor-saving and recreational devices. It has become virtually impossible to imagine life without them, and the role of the humble remote now extends beyond entertainment to the world of environment control. In addition to TVs, stereos and media players, our remotes control air conditioners, central heating, blinds and drapes and other residential appliances.

And now the domain of the remote extends to lighting control for ambience and energy efficiency. Actually, automated lighting control is not new, just not generally known, and to date somewhat expensive. In fact, the market for this innovation is already there – homeowners already accustomed to remote-controlled conveniences – it is just a case of capturing it.

Another essential element in the equation is now more favorable than ever – the price is right! And one company with the right focus, on people and their needs, is Futronix (a familiar name to anyone who follows F3 racing, following Robbie Kerr's dramatic winning season in the Futronix car for the 2003-4 UK Formula 3 Championships).



The Surrey-based lighting technology innovators – pioneers and high profile players in the digital lighting control industry since 1989 – have always sought to maintain consumer-friendly prices. After 18 years of research and development, Futronix can now proclaim that the world of affordable all-digital lighting control is here, and that soon we will no longer rely on manual dimmers and wall-mounted switch



plates. If we want to alter the level of the lights in our rooms, reaching for the remote will be as natural a reaction as it is now when we want to lower the volume or change to a different TV program.

Futronix' confidence is exemplified in their entry-level – but feature-packed nonetheless – P50 3-level dimmer, controlling a single circuit of lighting and offering 3 programmable levels of brightness, infra-red remote control, and an in-built sleep timer. With all this for less than £100, remote-controlled intelligent lighting is more affordable than ever – and the energy-efficient P50 saves even more every time lights are switched on . . . year in, year out!

With just one touch of the P50 the lighting will fade to your selected level. Press OFF and the lights will gently fade out. And at bedtime, the P50's in-built sleep delay is ideal for both adults and children's bedrooms. Ideal for living, study and bedroom areas, the P50's elegant design means it can be used with any decor scheme.



With the very latest Futronix digital dimming technology, the P50 single-circuit dimmer can dim tungsten, halogen or magnetic low voltage lamps with a maximum rating of 600W. The P50 easily replaces existing dimmer switches, and is unique in that it requires no neutral to operate – making it the perfect dimmer when refurbishing.

Further up the range, the more advanced Futronix P100, P400 and P800 dimmers offer infra-red remote control over 2, 4 and 8 channels of lighting respectively, and all feature 'scene dimming' as well. With the magic of 'scene dimming' aboard, these dimmers have the capacity to remember up to 20 programmable 'scenes' using different combinations of lamps and lighting levels to suit different occasions or purposes, and to alter lighting ambiance and atmosphere.



Once programmed, your settings will be remembered even after the power is switched off. These 'scenes' can be instantly recalled at the touch of a button . . . lift a finger, hit a button, and the lights will dim to an appropriate level. With Futronix, what could be easier?