

Mix and match

Nadine Dewell of Waterfall Audio thinks on-wall and in-wall speakers offer dealers and installers a chance to be creative



With the financial markets being squeezed still further this year, the Hi-Fi and custom installation markets, like other industries, are now feeling the pinch as some consumers reign in their spending. But there is still a rich vein of consumers who will either change their spending direction, pulling in resources from one area to spend on another, or at the higher end, are in the enviable position of rarely caring about finances and will simply spend if they see something that takes their fancy.

These latter-mentioned consumers are the key to growth for custom installers and discerning Hi-Fi dealers in 2008 and beyond – but only if they have the right

product mix in their portfolios.

When it comes to product, like everything else in our fast moving lives now, the buzz words are 'new', 'stylish' and 'different'. And with CI consumers, the less intrusive the operation is, the better.

Waterfall Audio has become a prominent brand throughout Europe with a unique glass loudspeaker range that blends very high technology and hand craftsmanship. It's great being 'stylish' and 'different' but it needs to be carefully combined with performance.

With their special design appeal the Elora satellites (as well as the brand new elegant, floor standing Victoria Evo and Iguasçu Evo glass speakers) should open new potential for a dealer or installer to enter the design community by enticing designers and architects with a different and unique product.

These same architects and designers can also be a direct link to the end customer or home project developer giving the edge to the installer or dealer trying to penetrate this market and be 'on job' from the beginning.

Their approach will be completely different from the widely used in-wall and in-ceiling products, which offer no design or originality, as all is hidden.

Your success as an installer or dealer is in differentiating yourself from the rest by proposing rich technology and performance with gorgeous lifestyle looks. It is true that from the beginning, offering something different represents an extra effort in selling the idea to the customer, but the positive results can be worthy of the effort – and crucially, your bottom line.

When designing the speakers at the beginning, Waterfall had in mind one of the most important factors then, but still in place now: the wife acceptance factor (WAF). By using glass, we override the traditionally female objection to bulky speakers and offer an alternative on-wall speaker that is a lighter operation for renovation projects, as bringing wires to the on-wall position is easier.

Apart from the obvious aesthetic design benefits, it's also worth bearing in mind the installation benefits – especially if you're dealing with historic or listed buildings. Because of building restrictions, many properties in the higher price bracket are refurbished or re-designed authentic structures where holes in walls or vinyl and plastic boxes simply won't do.

As any installer doing business in mainland Europe will know, construction methods can vary wildly; stone walls aren't purely the problem of historic buildings as a lot of new builds are also still using solid construction methods with limited stud work.

A recent project in Paris for Waterfall showed-off the Elora speakers in fantastic surroundings. The elegant, precision cut glass surrounds, married with the beautifully engineered slimline aluminium body, was able to achieve an architectural synergy with the Louis XVI interior.

So much so, that 40 units were used throughout the rooms of this historical refurbishment.

A special feature used here was the sand blasting of the owner's logo onto the glass surround. It was a really unique touch which adds extensive gravitas and could easily seal a deal – as well as being an additional invoicing opportunity! It's creative approaches like this that we all need to adopt in these uncertain times.

Nadine Dewell is Export Manager for Waterfall Audio, whose range of in-wall and on-wall products are distributed in the UK by Invision UK.

On-wall or in-wall speakers can work wonders in historic and listed buildings

