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## From home theaters to home wellness

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Jan Vitrofsky, CEO and founder of HEDsouth (Home Entertainment Design South), explains how the main control panel works at his home in Coconut Grove, on Nov. 22, 2019. PEDRO PORTAL [PPORTAL@MIAMIHERALD.COM](mailto:PPORTAL@MIAMIHERALD.COM)

In 1995, when then-President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary wanted to install a new home theater in the White House, they called Jan Vitrofsky, an expert in designing sound, video and home entertainment systems.

Beyond the White House, Vitrofsky, who now lives in Coconut Grove, has a long list of other luminary clients, including Barbara Streisand, Gloria and Emilio Estefan, Facundo Bacardi and Robert De Niro.

Over the years, he developed home entertainment systems into customized smart home designs, with voice-operated controls over security, lights, music, air conditioning, window shades and other devices. Recently he added systems promoting wellness to his company's menu.

Vitrofsky, 61, is the owner and CEO of HEDsouth (Home Entertainment Design South, Inc.), a company he founded in 1997 that is based in Hollywood. HEDsouth designs and installs custom home automation and entertainment systems for high-end clients, mostly in South Florida. The company works with new home builders and upgrades.

“I call myself a technologist,” Vitrofsky said. “I saw an opportunity to build a new business here because no one had my skills. So I moved here from New York ... the quality of life is much better.”

Vitrofsky got his professional start in the New York City area. Growing up in the Bronx in the 1960s, he was fascinated with the explosion of rock music, the new sounds and the increasing sophistication of equipment for playing music.

He turned his passion for music — and for tinkering with machines — into a career over the past four decades, first working as a salesman for sound and video equipment and learning about new technology and system integration on his own.

A key part of his career was spent working for Kloss Video, a company founded by Henry Kloss, a pioneer in developing advanced loudspeakers, home theater technology and big screen TV. After leaving Kloss, Vitrofsky set up his own company, Home Entertainment Design (HED), in New York.



A VSON indoor air pollution monitor, temperature and humidity meter, at the home of Jan Vitrofsky in Miami. Photos by Pedro Portal [PPORTAL@MIAMIHERALD.COM](mailto:PPORTAL@MIAMIHERALD.COM)

Vitrofsky's innovation designs made him a leading figure in home entertainment and home automation. At his home in Coconut Grove, Vitrofsky demonstrated his voice-activated system, which can be controlled by video panels, a PC, other touch screen pads or a smart phone. Run by a bank of computers with backup power, the system, like many he installs for clients, controls lighting, security, music, temperature, internal Wi-Fi and shades.

For example, when he enters a room he can request the sound system to play a specific Beatles song, adjust the temperature, the internal lighting or tweak the amount of sunlight entering the space, using voice or panel controls.

“Technology is in everyone’s life, whether they accept it or not,” he said. “Technology today makes it simple for everyone to operate complex devices. It makes the quality of life better.”

If there is a glitch in the home entertainment system, he said, usually it can be fixed by a reset online. And if HEDsouth cannot correct a problem online, the company immediately sends a team to a client’s home.

About three years ago, Vitrofsky began to focus on adding wellness options to his smart home systems. “Many people spend up to 90 percent of their time at home. We mostly live inside,” said Vitrofsky, who often works at home. Vitrofsky began researching the relationship between the quality of life in the home environment and individual health.

“The quality of indoor air, water and light can have an impact on our energy, sleep quality, allergies and moods,” he said.

For example, indoor lighting is different from the natural change in outdoor lighting caused by the sun’s position. This can effect the natural “body clock” (circadian rhythms) that tells us when to eat, sleep and wake up, Vitrofsky said. HEDsouth can install a calibrated lighting system creating a “dawn simulation” that mimics the rising sun and other times of the day.

“I saw the handwriting on the wall,” he said, “and we began incorporating wellness features into our projects.”

HEDsouth, and its affiliate company in Los Angeles, HEDsocial, work with Delos, a company that provides programs and solutions in home and commercial settings. A wellness-oriented system can control the quality of air and water, as well as the quality and intensity of lighting in homes and offices.

**Company name:** HEDsouth (Home Entertainment Design South, Inc.)

**Leadership/owner:** Jan Vitrofsky, founder, owner and CEO.

**Founded:** In 1997.

**Headquarters:** 2010 Thomas St., Hollywood. Vitrofsky often works out of his home in Coconut Grove.

**Affiliate:** Vitrofsky and two partners, Ofer Abutbul and Shalom Illouz, experts in electrical, lighting and automated home control systems, co-founded HEDsocal in Los Angeles, Calif., in early 2019. The firm is developing the luxury home entertainment and wellness market on the West Coast.

**Employees:** 28 full-time staff members in South Florida, including technicians, installers and other professionals.

**Services:** HEDsouth designs, installs and maintains advanced, high-tech systems that provide home entertainment facilities and other systems for security, lighting, air conditioning, window shades and electrical wiring. The company stresses the use of new tech devices that deliver healthy air, water and light to residents. Internal lighting, for example, is programmed to reflect circadian (day and night) rhythms that promote healthy sleep and work patterns. All systems are programmed by residents and can be controlled by voice commands, electronic wall panels and smart phones.

**Clients:** Mostly high-end residences. About 80 percent of customers are owners/builders of new luxury residences, and 20 percent are refits. HEDsouth also works with some commercial clients. The company does occasional projects out of state and overseas.

**Financials:** Projects range from several thousand dollars to several million. The company will not reveal dollar figures, but said that revenue has grown by 10-15 per cent annually in recent years. As of late November 2019, total revenues, including HEDsocal, have expanded by about 30 percent over the previous year thanks mainly to the introduction of wellness solutions.

**Competitors:** Acoustic Architects and AHT Residential, both based in Miami.

**The difference:** “It’s very important to be a good listener, to be completely transparent, fulfill the client’s desires and not sell them things they don’t need,” Vitrofsky said. “We treat everyone with respect.” HEDsouth not only provides the best equipment and systems suited to a client’s budget, but also provides rapid home service when required.

**Client view:** Miami-based Dorlom Construction, which builds homes ranging from \$2 million to \$30 million, has been working with HEDsouth for more than a decade, said Ray Rodriguez, Dorlom’s president and co-owner. “They provide all our low-voltage

systems for homes, including video, music, alarms, lighting, internal wi-fi and controls,” Rodriguez said.

“The quality of their service is second to none, and they provide buyers with all the best alternatives for equipment in terms of quality and price options.” High-tech systems like those supplied by HEDsouth are complicated, but “Jan makes them very user friendly,” he said. There is rarely a glitch in the systems HEDsouth installs, “but their team is at your home whenever you need it.”

**Strategy and outlook:** HEDsouth and HEDsocial will continue to expand their traditional services in the luxury residential markets of South Florida and southern California, while stressing residential air and water systems that reduce contaminants and custom lighting that are conducive to wellness and natural life rhythms, the company says. As people pay more attention to the quality of life at home, Vitrofsky expects strong demand for residential environments that include advanced wellness systems as an essential element in new homes.