

HOME AND GARDEN

Digital entertainment centre latest

With technology moving at breathtaking speed, it's hard to keep up with the latest developments in home video equipment.

"The biggest change in the industry is the digital home theatre entertainment centre," states Video World's Michael DeCaspro.

These combine audio and video equipment to produce high quality television pictures and excellent sound.

Trends in video show that "people are going more for the projection television rather than the conventional 20" or 28" screen; they're looking at anything from 33 to 50 inches."

BIG COMEBACK

Making a big comeback, he observes, is the laser disc. "It's really become part of the video market in a big way. A lot of the top companies, like Sony, Pioneer and Yamaha, are taking time and effort to produce them (laser disc players), and

VCRs now come with 'learning' remotes which means the VCR remote can be programmed to perform the functions of operating both the recorder and the television, even if they're different makes.

the picture quality is the best available besides Super VHS."

Once discs become more widely available for rental, probably later this year, DeCaspro expects the sale of the players to take off. With a price tag of around \$999, the laser disc player can become part of the home entertainment system, with the capability of playing both audio and video discs of all sizes.

The marriage of audio and video is a universal trend, acknowledges Dave Stonehouse of Wellington Way Stereo.

"People are linking their videos into their stereo systems. Basically, the most definite trend is into stereo in the television set and video recorder. There's some tendency for people in the high end capacity to go to Super VHS,

but it's a small percentage, maybe 5 per cent."

SURROUND SOUND

Surround sound is another popular innovation. "It gives you the quality of sound you'd get in a theatre," explains Stonehouse. Equipment compatibility is a major consideration for today's more sophisticated buyer, he believes. "They want to be sure they're not buying another Beta product."

Luis Sinn at The Future Shop in Unionville, says that today's consumer can expect superior quality and lower prices as equipment gets more so sophisticated.

Camcorders retailing at under \$1,000 are widely available and the quality of pictures is considerably better, because they're completely solid state cameras.

CONVENIENCE

With units now weighing as little as 2 lbs in total, convenience is another major factor. "Their sensitivity to light has been improved and they don't need a video light, because it's all built in," he adds.

And editing your home movie has never been easier, thanks to new technology.

"The result can give you the same quality you get on television. Throughout the video market, prices have been reduced considerably, while equipment has far more features," notes Sinn.

VCRs now come with "learning remotes," he states, which means the VCR remote can be programmed to perform the functions of operating both the recorder and the television, even if they're different makes.

As for the once frustrating process of timed recording "it's considerably simpler. The full instructions appear on the screen; you don't have to worry that you may have forgotten something so it won't record what you want."

The latest televisions offer features like split screens, and some can show what's on five or six channels on the screen at one time.

"You get higher definition, which means better picture quality," explains Sinn, "and there's a great demand for large screen television, from 33" to 37", as well as the 40" projection screens."

Combo packages trendy

Home entertainment packages, featuring a combination of audio and video components, are a big trend in the current marketplace, according to Luis Sinn of The Future Shop.

Today's big audio seller is the compact disc (CD) player. "Records are becoming obsolete and no one buys turntables now," confirms Sinn. With the new equipment however, "you can expect it to last a lot longer, because it's completely solid state. Technology has advanced to the point where it should be trouble free."

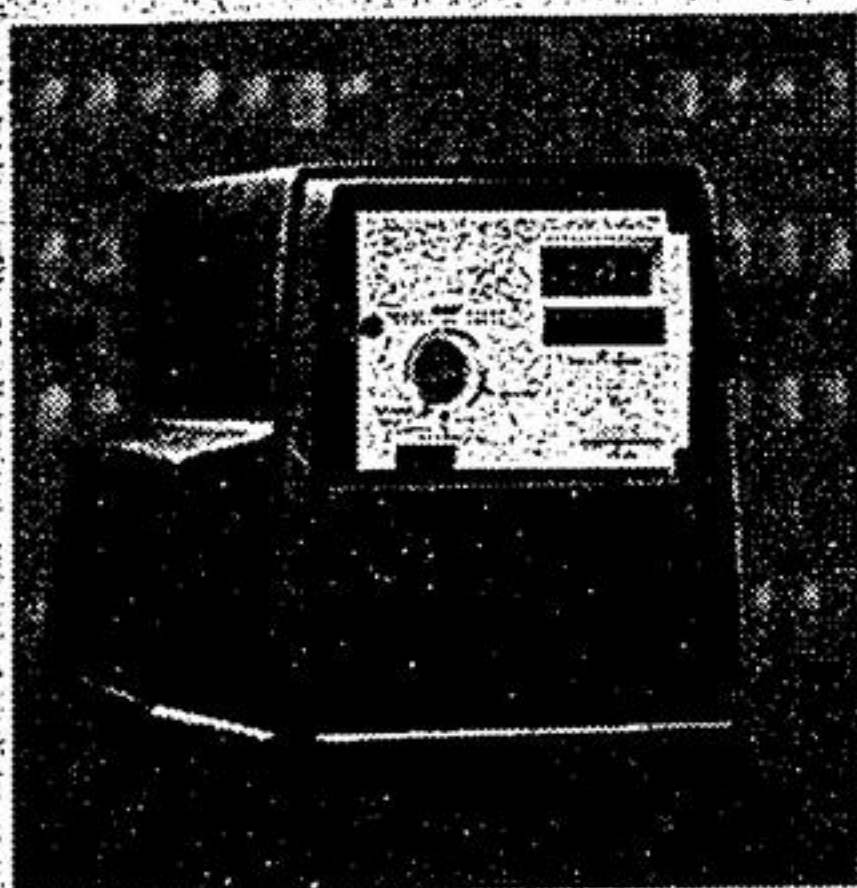
People are demanding more powerful sound systems, he adds. "For years people could live with 35 or 50 watts; that was all they needed. Nowadays, they want 200 watts;

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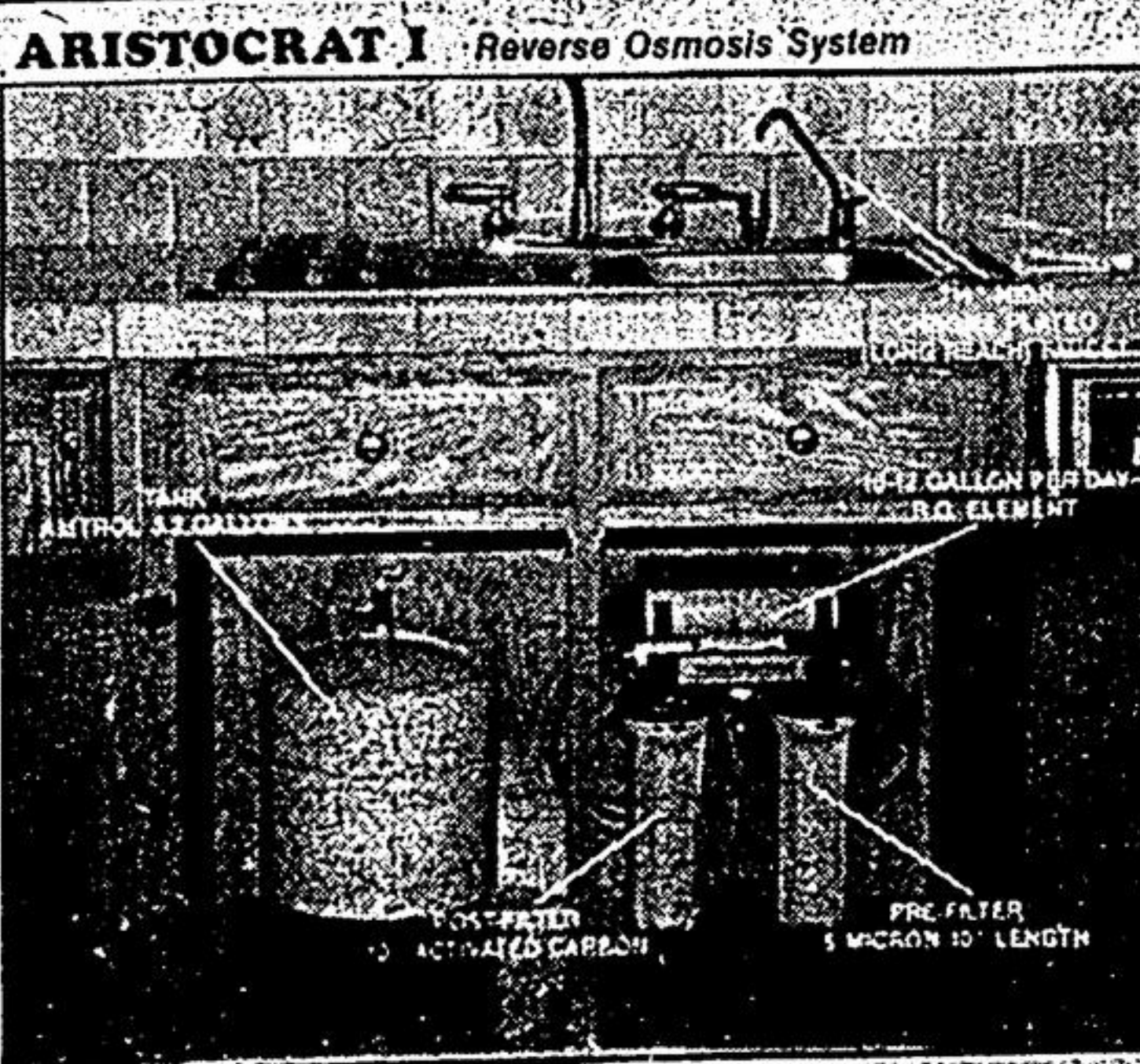


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