

BRICKS

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Facts, figures and fantasies from the world of property 9 FEBRUARY 2007

FRIDAYS

AND MORTAR

TOP TEN... BOY'S TOYS

WEALTHY MALE buyers attracted to the "luxury hotel" look expect their new home to be stashed with a significant amount of high-tech kit. Hedge-fund managers, footballers and playboy entrepreneurs like playing with flashy toys, and we're not just talking Ferraris and lap-dancers. Here's the low down:

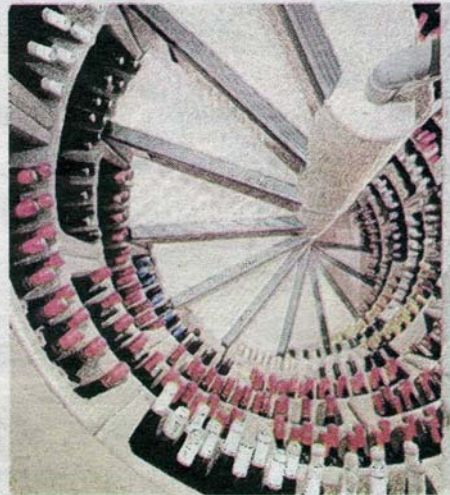
■ No one's impressed by vast flat-screen tellies any more. Instead, convert your attic into a proper home cinema. Gibson Music (www.gibson-music.com) will install a screen, projector, speakers, mood lighting, touchscreen control and banquette seating from £25,000.

■ Your bog-standard plasma TV can be jazzed up with a Kaleidescape DVD film server, which gives instant access to a huge library of downloaded films, searchable by genre, artist or director. The property developers Finchatton (www.finchatton.com) can kit you out for about £30,000. You'll never have to darken Blockbuster's door again.

■ If your interior decor is all white walls and voile curtains, brighten things up at parties with Living Surface technology, which projects a digital image on to the floor that moves when you touch it. Virtual swimming fish or footprints in sand can be yours from £7,000.

■ How to store your fine wines when you don't have a cellar? Every playboy worthy of the name should have a climate-controlled "cellar", top, sunk into the floor. Spiral Cellars (www.spiralcellars.com) can house up to 1,600 bottles at a minimum cost of £15,000.

■ If you spend a lot of time abroad, perhaps playing in Serie A, you can monitor your home



online to ensure no one nabs your home cinema. Burglars robbing a house in Liverpool were recently spotted by the owner on his laptop in Spain. His system cost £20,000. Try SMC systems (www.smc-uk.com).

■ A team of chauffeurs bearing chamois leathers cannot stop your Bentley being scratched as you reverse out of your garage. Candy & Candy (www.candyandcandy.com), designers to the rich, will pad your garage walls in tasteful colours, to cushion the blow.

■ Fumbling with keys on your doorstep won't impress your date. Finchatton installs a system from Seible in its smartest flats which uses proximity sensors, meaning your front door can sense the presence of your key fob a metre away and will open automatically.

■ For the full 007 effect, furniture must have secret functions. Candy & Candy can do you a dining table that changes into a roulette table, left, or a pool which, courtesy of a hydraulic cover, becomes a dance floor.

■ Listening to Puccini in the bath no longer requires a battery-powered radio. Gibson Music will install touchscreen, multi-room audio systems from £10,000. An extra £600 will get you a Crestron iPod interface, allowing you to select tracks individually.

■ Lutron technology can save you from stubbed toes when answering a night-time call of nature. As your foot touches the carpet, sensors activate subtle lights under your bed, which then follow you through the house. From £40,000, via Finchatton.

LUCY ALEXANDER

