



Seek lines in this modular cabinet create a minimalist setting for the TV.



Put a plasma television on a wall at a comfortable viewing height, away from the central focus of the room.

How to keep the new mega TV from devouring your living room

ART OF THE BIG SCREEN

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For Ottawa Citizen

Designer Carol Gunn has witnessed the technology-versus-design battle many times. It usually goes like this, says the veteran designer who has helped many private clients build around the newest hot button in home entertainment — the big, honking television.

The husband sees a flat-screen TV in an electronics shop and decides to buy it. It's huge and often comes with extra speakers. But when it arrives home, the wife has a conniption because the living room now looks like an electronics shop. The new flat-screen TV is the focus of the room.

And as the husband sits in the living room, he notices a design flaw. The TV is too big for the room.

Market research firm iSupply says the average North American price of LCD TVs in the most popular size dropped by nearly 50 per cent during the past year. And flat-panel LCD or plasma sets generated 63 per cent of all sales compared to just 39 per cent a year earlier.

Flat-screen TVs were all over the place at the recent Interior Design Show in Toronto. On the one hand, there were companies showing off the technology. On the other, there were designers and fur-



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panels and shelves, which can be extensive as needed. Wires are hidden behind the panels and all electronics — TV, speakers, whatever — are mounted to the system itself instead of to the wall. "You can grow this system section by section," says Burns, adding that it can also be taken with you if you move.

Old-style boxy cube televisions needed wide shelves or special stands and created their own issues.

But walk into electronics stores today and you will see TVs with a whole different look: screens that are rectangular rather than square, and television sets as flat as a pairing instead of big and boxy.

And guess what? The new models won't fit into

"home cube" style cabinets, you are going to have to think about how you're going to mount it.

The trend in the industry is in-wall speakers," says Thuyrdik, adding, "Many per cent of people get surround sound, plus a lot of TVs will work on a computer."

There's another choice — halfway between wall mounting and shelving units — and that's creating a false wall that hides the wires without having to fish them through the walls.

"We've been making our mounts for 20 years, trying to solve customers' issues of getting TVs up on the wall," says Don Burns, CEO of Vantage Point Products Corp. of Santa Fe Springs, Calif., creator of the Evo System.

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Dark-coloured wall will reduce visual bulk of large TV

BIG SCREEN
Continued from H



This modular wall unit from EQ3 features a series of drawers and shelves to stash all of your electronic treasures.

panels and shelves, which can be extensive as needed. Wires are hidden behind the panels and all electronics — TV, speakers, whatever — are mounted to the system itself instead of to the wall. "You can grow this system section by section," says Burns, adding that it can also be taken with you if you move. Another option is shelving, with or without a wall-mounted TV. Furniture stores now have all sorts of options for people who are putting in flat-screen TVs. They include low-stung shelving units that sit underneath a wall-mounted TV, as well as more conventional "entertainment centres" sized to accommodate the flat, rectangular panels.