

# WELCOME TO MY SMART HOME

New devices greet visitors with cool tech (door)bells and whistles

By Sharon Jayson

With spring visitors heading to your house, some of the latest innovations in home technology can welcome your guests at the door.

Options include door locks that can be remotely locked and unlocked, doorbells with video and two-way audio, and garage door openers that use geo-location from your smartphone to automatically open the door when you're near home (and can also alert you if you forgot to close the garage door.)



SMART LIVING

Such conveniences, which until recently had been reserved for more high-end homes, are now expanding to the DIY market as well as by custom installation, experts say.

"With organizations like Apple getting involved and the Amazon Echo, Samsung SmartThings and Works with Nest, these huge brands are bringing home automation to the masses," said Mike Buckingham of San Francisco-based August Home.

Because of the varied wireless communications networks, including Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, ZigBee and Z-Wave, consumers will need to determine what's compatible with their home systems.

Many companies – from well-known names to start-ups – debuted new smart products last fall at the international trade show CEDIA (an association of home technology professionals) in Dallas.

Here's a sample of what's new in the world of smarts for entry to your home.

## Smart Front Door Locks

August Smart Lock HomeKit Enabled (\$229) from August Home uses Bluetooth and Wi-Fi and turns your smartphone into another key to your front door. Because it replaces only the interior side of your standard deadbolt while maintaining the exterior door hardware, it's simple to install, said Buckingham, of August Home.



The Kwikset Obsidian

"Ninety-five percent of our end-users have put it in themselves," he said. "You don't have to buy a new lock. Your existing keys work." Kwikset, a door lock and door hardware company, introduced four new products at CEDIA last year. The top of the line is a 10-digit touchscreen electronic deadbolt called Obsidian (\$229) that uses no keys. Other offerings include a Contemporary SmartCode 914, (\$229) which has a 10-digit backlit push-button keypad and a Contemporary SmartCode 916 touchscreen electronic deadbolt (\$249). Also, a product called Kwikset Convert, that turns mechanical locks — even non-Kwikset locks — into Z-Wave smart locks, will launch in June (\$129).

"Electronic locks also keep a record of when that code was entered and give you notification. So if you want to check, for example, to make sure your mother got there safely, you can set it up with a notification that a code you gave them was used on your lock and at what time and what day," said Ashton Good of Kwikset.

## Smart Video Doorbells

A variety of companies at CEDIA in 2016 showed off their version of the video doorbell, which allows homeowners to answer the door on-site or remotely and speak with the visitor, no matter where the homeowner happens to be. These video doorbells have built-in HD cameras, Wi-Fi capability, image capture, night vision and can work with lock systems to remotely

The Ring Video Doorbell



unlock the door for the visitor. The homeowner can see who's at the door and get a video recording of the exchange. Many of these doorbells also have motion sensors that alert the homeowner when someone is on the front porch, even if he or she doesn't ring the bell.

The Ring Video Doorbell (\$199) can replace the current doorbell or use its rechargeable battery if the original bell is in a difficult-to-access location.

"Burglars tend to knock on your door or ring your doorbell before breaking in to check to see if there is anyone home," said Yassi Shahmiri, of Ring. "The key to Ring is that your visitors have no idea whether you are home or not as the Ring Doorbell provides a presence to any home."

Another option is the Skybell HD Wi-Fi Video Doorbell (\$199), which offers full-color night vision. RemoBell Wireless Video Doorbell, a product of Olive & Dove, (\$199) is battery-powered and can be placed on or next to your door. The August Doorbell Camera (\$199) is hardwired and replaces your existing doorbell.



The Garageio

## Smart Garage Door Openers

Part of the appeal of a smart garage is that your phone will notify you if you forgot to close the garage door and will let you close it remotely from anywhere there's an internet connection.

Because of its geo-location ability, the garage door can open automatically when your smartphone is near home. A smart garage door opener requires Wi-Fi, but can work with existing openers. They include Garageio (\$199 for one-door and \$209 for two-door) and Chamberlain MyQ Garage (\$130). For a completely new garage door system, there's Chamberlain Wi-Fi Garage Door Opener (\$268).

