

System provides customers sense of security while away from home

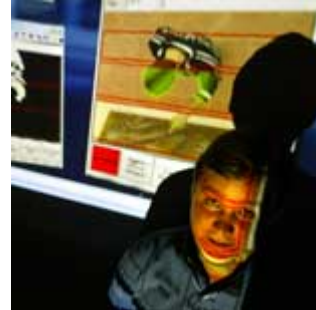
By **Rachel Melcer**

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Don Davis is a banker, sports-car collector, father and self-proclaimed "gadget guy." When he went looking for a home-security system, he wanted to find a Ferrari at a Ford price.

"I wanted some kind of security that would not be your everyday alarm system, where the alarm goes off and the police come five minutes later," he said.



Davis turned to Overland-based Arteco Vision Systems Inc., the recently established U.S. subsidiary of an Italian security firm. He is one of Arteco's first residential customers.

To get the options that Davis desired -- instant alerts sent to a cell phone or other wireless device, the ability to check a live camera view from any Web browser and high-resolution day-and-night recording -- "didn't seem like it would be affordable for someone like me. It would have been crazy to do it for a house," he said.

"I wanted to do what they have at the bank for my house," said Davis, a vice president at National City bank in Clayton and a resident of Ladue. "I wound up with something better."

Arteco, which opened nearly a year ago but spent months doing market research before beginning sales, is targeting homeowners such as Davis as well as small-business owners and larger firms. It sells through distributors, general contractors and building-systems integrators.

The company's goal is to show that its type of high-tech security system "doesn't have to be a top-tier option," said Steve Birkmeier, director of marketing.

Arteco's systems range from \$3,000 to \$16,000, depending on options such as the number of cameras and whether they include night-vision recording.

Davis said he spent about \$18,000 to cover his home with its circular drive, outdoor pool and hot tub, a garage that was converted into an entertainment center and a new outbuilding that holds more than a dozen luxury cars.

Arteco's technology lets users set virtual tripwires and perimeters, along with up to 11

criteria that must all be simultaneously true in order to send an alarm. For example, a doorway could be defined and an alert triggered when an object of a certain size is present for a particular length of time. It works with standard security systems that respond to a broken window or opened door.

The parameters can be changed over any Web browser that leads to Arteco's software. Because it is quick and easy to access, users can change monitored areas such as a perimeter around a corporate jet that has temporarily landed at a small airport, or a boat stopping at a marina, Birkmeier said.

In addition to homeowners, Arteco is targeting banks that need to watch employee entrances and external ATMs, private airports and health care providers that can use its system to monitor patients.

"It's a business that's taking off. We are forecasting tremendous growth in the next year or so," said Giorgio Bucci, president of Arteco Vision Systems and a director of its parent company, Faenza, Italy-based Arteco SpA. The parent is among a dozen firms that comprise Bucci Holding Group.

Arteco SpA is funding the American operation, including an aggressive expansion plan, said Bucci, who holds a master's of business administration from St. Louis University.

The parent company also is the source of Arteco Vision Systems' technology. It began as an automated control-and-command system provider for industry, then was expanded into large, custom security systems for museums, highways, public infrastructure and transit centers.

The proprietary software developed for its big clients filters down to homeowners such as Davis.

In Overland, Arteco has five employees plus five regional outside sales representatives. Last month, it was accepted as a supplier into the PSA Security Network, an electronic security purchasing cooperative with members responsible for more than \$1.4 billion annually in security installations.

Arteco also is hiring more sales staff to accommodate demand that "is like a little snowball that is coming down the hill at a high rate of speed," said national sales manager Ray Rudy.

Jennifer Martin, director of vendor management and education with PSA Security Network, said Arteco's systems are not unique. But it is combining a variety of emerging technologies -- such as real-time alerts sent over nearly any wireless device -- in a different way than its competitors.

"They've put together a robust package at a good price," she said.

It would be a good solution for small-business owners who need to simultaneously monitor multiple locations, but can't afford staff to sit on site or at a bank of video screens, for example, Martin said.

Davis said the system gives him peace of mind. He can respond to an alert by checking a real-time video feed over the Internet from any location, allowing him to rule out false alarms. High-resolution recordings would let him zoom in on a face or a license-plate number if a thief should strike. And he and his wife also can keep an eye on their teenaged daughters when they're home alone.

"I can immediately see what's going on," he said. "I definitely feel more safe and more aware of what's going on at the house at all times."

Arteco Vision Systems

Headquarters: Overland

Parent: Arteco SpA of Faenza, Italy

Employees: 10

Business: Sells wholesale, high-tech security systems

Web site: www.ArtecoUS.com