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Section 9

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# Home

## Soaking up luxury

Super bathrooms that turn your home into a spa



# ASK THE EXPERTS

e-mail your questions to [propertyexperts@sunday-times.co.uk](mailto:propertyexperts@sunday-times.co.uk)



The tech consultant

**I am refurbishing my home. What cabling should I install to future-proof it?**

**MJ, Esher**

Rapid changes in the way we send and receive data mean it is impossible to truly future-proof a home. In spite of this, a well-designed cabling infrastructure will allow you to transfer and share large files, including high-definition (HD) video

around your home. I advise you to employ a professional firm to specify and install the infrastructure, because the range of products on offer is so wide. To find a local specialist, contact the Custom Electronic Design and Installation Association, 01480 213 744, [www.cedia.co.uk](http://www.cedia.co.uk).

Traditionally, Cat5E cabling is used in home networks, but I suggest you use Cat6. It is about 25%-35% more expensive, but will provide extra bandwidth in future for audio and video.

The latest wireless products can theoretically stream HD video, although in practice are seldom fast enough. Dropped packets of data will not be obvious when web browsing and e-mailing, but will be disastrous for streaming audio and video. Be aware, too, that building materials, particularly foil-backed plasterboard, used in some homes can interfere with wireless audio and video.

Optical fibre products may well provide all the bandwidth that you require in the future. The price of this technology has come down recently and may well be the closest thing to future-proofing that your installer can offer.

*Malcolm Stewart is co-founder of custom installation company Kensington Home Technology*



Murray Close/Paramount Pictures

**Technology is moving so fast that future-proofing your home may prove mission impossible**

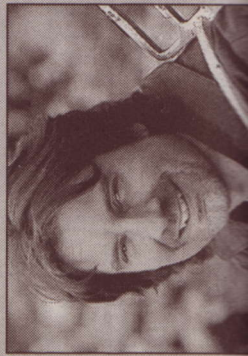
particularly those able to take a long view of any investment in the region. The country has an excellent climate, high standards of building construction and many golf courses. Laws have also restricted the seemingly uncontrolled building so prevalent in Spain.

The Algarve, and the area around Cabanas, in particular, have potential for further growth. I would suggest you can expect annual growth of about 5% a year there, so you need to



The overseas adviser

use any curves that contain the roots of troublesome weeds, such as ground elder and bindweed. Cover the heap with a sheet of black polythene (or old carpet) and leave for 12 months. The resulting soil will be ideal for topping up garden borders and raised beds, or for using in home-made compost mixes.



The gardener

raking the surface to a fine and level tilth. Use a trowel to create a series of small holes 4in-6in apart, and plant a single set in each one – the pointed tips should be just visible.

During the growing season, keep the area weed-free and water the plants in dry weather. The onions should be harvested in midsummer when the leaves turn yellow and