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TECHNOLOGY

NOW, ELEVATORS GET DIGIT READERS

Recently I was treated to a high-tech taste of how the other one-tenth of 1 percent lives.

That is, I tried out new technology available to residents of Jade condominium on Brickell Avenue in Miami.

As a security measure, the elevators work only by fingerprint. Residents must register their digits with the condo office, then put their index finger on a small scanner-like device.

A 10.4-inch touch-screen panel in each unit's kitchen can be used to call valet parking, dim or brighten the condo's lights, schedule a massage or a mail courier pickup, display a TV camera view of the front lobby, and close the automatic hurricane shutters.

And those functions can be done remotely, via the Web. So condo owners in Venezuela or Manhattan worried about a Category 3 coming to South Florida can go online and shut the shutters. They can also do less-essential tasks like checking on whether a cleaning or repair person entered the condo as scheduled.

Each of the 338 units has a private Wi-Fi network.

When contractors come in, they are given a heat- and sweat-sensitive ID badge that disintegrates after a day.

The recorded voice that tells you when your valet-parked car is ready is the same that says "You've Got Mail" for America Online.

It's part George Jetson, part James Bond, part Maxwell Smart.

The touch-screen technology is by **Simplikate**, a subsidiary of Hollywood-based property management and maintenance firm **The Continental Group**.

The Wi-Fi system is by **Vitel Communications Inc.** of Miami.

Simplikate is developing the touch-screen technology for at least a half-dozen other condos in South Florida.

For now, this stuff is a toy for the very wealthy; most of the Jade condos run from \$1 million to \$2.5 million.

Such systems are never flawless. Residents might find some rules — like the one prohibiting them from going to any floor other than their own without permission — too restrictive.

But over the next several years, as they gain acceptance,

kitchen touch-screens might become viewed less as a luxury and more like a feature condos will need to stay competitive.

"It's an absolute differentiator," says Continental President Richard Strunin. "It's going to become a way of life in high-end and mid-priced buildings."

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