

REACHING NEW

El met with Nic Black, MD of Pyramid, to take the tour of the Linn Audio system and conference facilities installed by the company in this impressive Five Star London, Hotel.

Pyramid was formed 15 years ago with its main base and offices being in Plymouth, but with offices in London and Poole in Cornwall. In the early years the company specialized in AV for conferences and events, but now the split is around 65% installation work and the rest conferences and events.

Nic explains: "We do a lot of marine work, with two jobs recently completed and another three on the go at the moment. We have a strong relationship with Princess Yachts, and work within the factory as the boats are produced. However, the retro fit model works much better with yachts and that is what we concentrate on now."

Nic explains that the company also does a lot of corporate install including hotels, boardrooms and digital signage. Domestic forms a small part of the company's activity, but as Nic explains, many second homer's bring their own installers with them to the west country so the work can be restricted. However, the company is involved in a couple of domestic installs currently. Much of the company's work is repeat business and Pyramid likes to work with a small portfolio of products it knows well. In the world of audio, Linn, Bose and JBL are often used and in terms of control the company favours AMX and RTI. Kalidescape is the weapon of choice for servers, particularly in terms of marine work as Nic says the system is highly reliable.

THE HOTEL VERTA PROJECT

Hotel Verta is a Five Star hotel in London's Battersea catering specifically to a high-net worth clientele. Located right next to the area's helipad and with a fleet of cars waiting outside (including Bentleys) to take the guests into London, this Spa/conference based hotel is seriously high-end in every way. Nic says a demonstration of the particular group the hotel is targeting is that recently the venue played host to an auction of James Bond memorabilia when one of the original Aston Martins used in Gold Finger



■ Linn, Pyramid and Hotel Verta combine to make an impressive impact

HEIGHTS

WITH PYRAMID



Normally focused on luxury country hotels, the von Essen hotels group called on Pyramid to help with its first metropolitan hotel



quibble when we recommended the more expansive, but higher performance of the Linn approach.”

“Pyramid has been using Linn on marine projects for many years, but this was the first time we had specified a Linn system of this size, so it was very frustrating to have to wait for a year after the first fix was completed to get in there and fully commission the system. However, once the team was called back in August of last year, it had just two months to complete and fully commission the system.”

Pyramid supplied music to the public areas, including mezzanine bar, restaurant, spa area (with six treatment rooms) and multi-purpose conference and meeting facilities, as well as a digital signage system to display hotel info on a TV in the foyer and around the hotel. The company also supplied AV into the Helipad adjacent to the hotel.

The whole system is simply controlled over AMX wall panels and a hand-held option in the conference area and is fully compatible with the Dynalite lighting system and panic alarms located in the spa area. Controlled from behind the reception desk or both bar areas, the staff can choose between different piped music streams supplied over a subscription based music service and can choose different streams for different zones. Pyramid has kept the control interface and options nice and simple here. Many different members of staff use the system, so it needs to be quick to learn. It was also a challenge to get all the necessary staff trained whilst the hotel was very busy preparing to open, so a few service calls were needed to get everyone up to speed.

Nic explains: “One of the other main challenges here was that the mezzanine bar area over the main restaurant was not originally intended to be occupied at all, it was a void space, so finding enough space

and in the right places to site the in-ceiling speakers was not easy. Another challenge was dealing with the sheer size of space we needed to fill with sound. We are not looking for huge volume here, mostly the system is used for background music whilst people relax with a meal or a drink. But we had to use more speakers than we normally would, so we could get the right level of quality at lower volumes. The Mezzanine bar was a particular challenge as the ceiling is low and there are many columns that can cause a problem by bouncing the sound around, but working with Linn kit and the room, we were able to get a good sound.”

The majority of the speakers used are a mixture of Linn 104 and Diskreet models, but Pyramid also employed Sweetspots to tighten the audio coverage. Several Linn Majik 126 Sub Bass speakers were also used in the Ground/Mezzanine floor areas to add a little

when for £3.5 million.

Pyramid was asked to tender for the audio provision and conference facilities after a recommendation from Philips Dynalite which has a strong relationship with the installer.

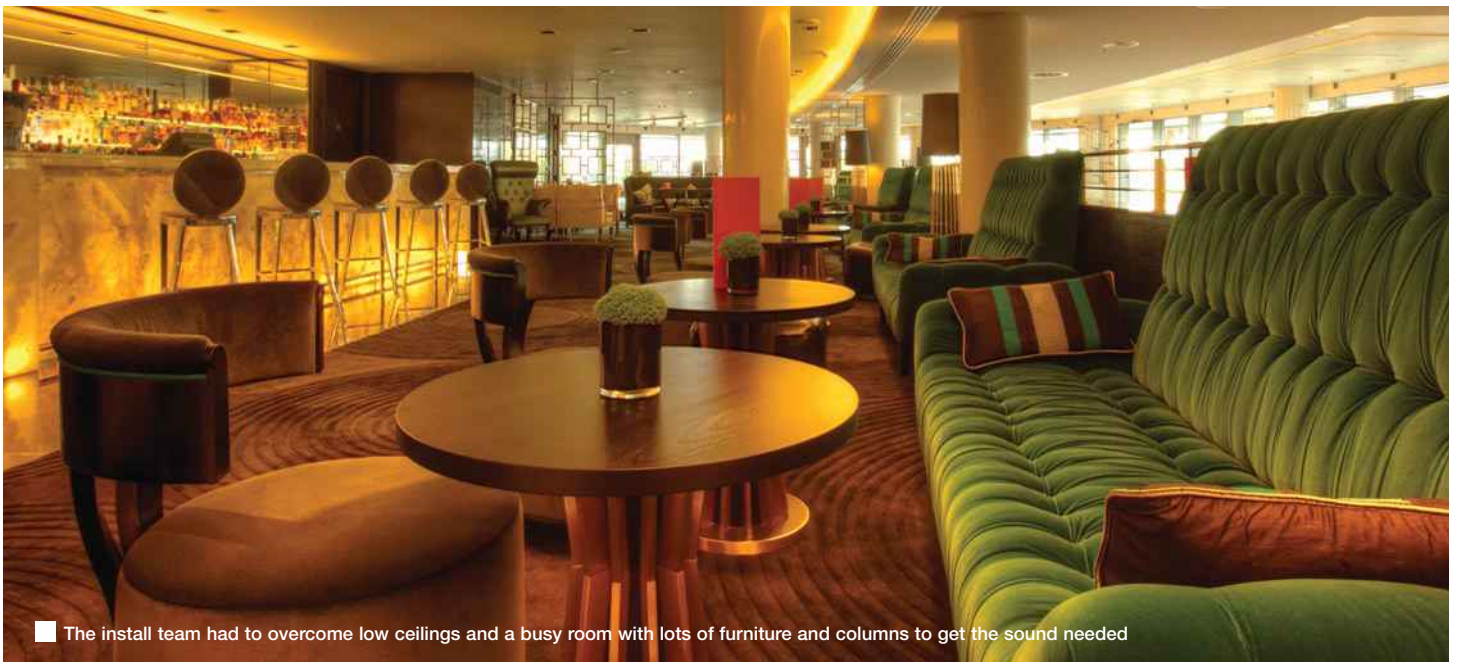
Nic takes up the story: “We got asked to tender in January of 2009 and I think the original plan was to open in September of 2009, but once the first fix was completed, the project was delayed by a year and was actually completed in September 2010.

Nic adds: “von Essen hotels normally runs luxury country based hotels, so this was its first metropolitan project and a real departure for the company.

Nic explains: “The client told us they wanted the best of the best for this project and so our reaction was to spec Linn for the audio system. To its credit, the hotel was true to its word in wanting the best and did not



■ The Linn audio system is part of the relaxation process in the spa areas



■ The install team had to overcome low ceilings and a busy room with lots of furniture and columns to get the sound needed

more punch to the sound. Various Majik 6100 amps drive the system.

Nic explains: "Working on a resi project, quite often the client wants to get involved with the install and as we know that can be a mixed blessing. However, what was

great here was that the client understood our expertise and we were left alone to get on with the job. It was a tight deadline to get the second phase and commissioning finished, but all in all it turned out to be quite a straightforward job."

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■ The audio system in the dining area has much to cope with including regular helicopter landings right next to the hotel

Nic adds: "In dealing with Linn we were confident right from the start that we were dealing with the right company for this project. Linn makes sure all its dealers are properly trained and that shows the company cares about the product and the outcome. The Diskreet is a really solid speaker with a very flush profile, it does all you ask of it and you can paint the grille, it's just a very robust speaker. The 104s deliver really good quality sound and compare very well with anything else out there. This project has put us fully back in love with Linn, the company really does listen and take on-board as far as it can what customers have to say."

CONFERENCE/MEETING AREAS, THE SPA AND THE HELIPORT

Moving up to the conference and meeting room area, there are custom made display screens to show what events are taking place in which room and there is an impressive double screen projection system in the main conference area using NEC projection and Future Automation drop down cages. *El* particularly liked the simplicity of the idea of providing a simple solution like the iPod dock for users to bring their own music as some conference facilities can be over engineered and need technicians on hand for the simplest tasks. With its own experience of the events industry, Pyramid made sure it presented a simple AMX interface that after a couple of minutes practice provides all the functions a presenter will need. The conference area also contains some neat hidden subs to fill out audio performance. Pyramid also supplied AV into the six meeting rooms in the conference area one being equipped with video conferencing abilities.

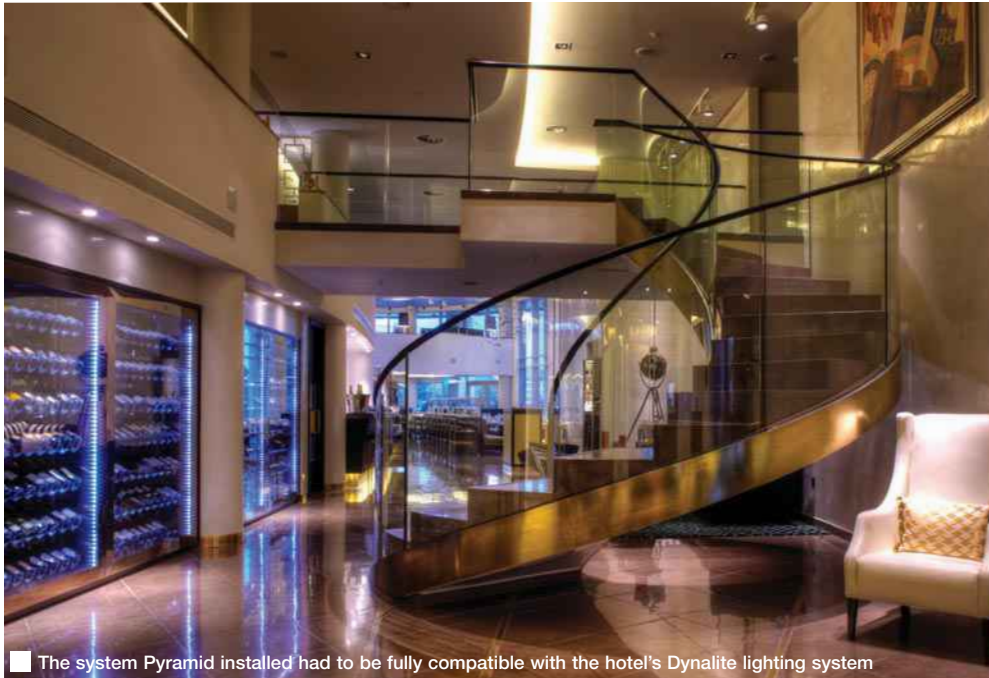
Down in the Spa areas it was important that the staff were able to mix the right relaxing music with the area's lighting system and the project works to great effect providing a relaxing and integrated performance for its pampered guests. The post treatment rooms also have their own headphones with selectable music streams.

The heliport system covers the main arrivals/departure /reception lounge which is a well appointed area with TV/iPod and music stream audio.



■ The conference area boasts an impressive and easy to control set up including a double projection system





The system Pyramid installed had to be fully compatible with the hotel's Dynalite lighting system

AMX controllers provide the user switching and control. The VIP waiting area has its own stand alone system with Linn Diskreets and Majik 126 sub bass. The Heliport is operated separately to the hotel, but the close proximity means there is a close relationship.

Overall Nic feels the project has been a great success, providing the opportunity for more work expanding the hotel's AV offering in the future and supporting some key events at the hotel. The project will also help the company expand the activity of its recently opened London office.

More information on Pyramid can be found at www.pyramid-presentations.co.uk

THE ESSENTIAL KIT

- 101 Linn Diskreet Round (Pair)
- 14 Linn Sizmik 10
- 3 Linn Majik 6100 Amps
- 34 Linn Custom 2k 104C Speakers
- 8 AMX MET-6N Local Control Panel
- 3 Sennheiser RS120 rechargeable headphones
- 1 AMX NI2100 Controller
- 1 AMX PS-SP2.8 Server
- 3 Precis LT 8x8 A2 RCA DSP 2U BP DSP Matrix
- 5 Kramer WA20N
- 5 Kramer WA23N
- 1 Xixin Rack
- 1 AMX MVP5200i Master Control Panel (wireless)
- 1 AMX WCS52 Mater Control Panel Wireless Wall Dock
- 1 Extron MTPX Plus 816 Matrix Switcher
- 1 Extron MTP RL 15HD RS CAT 5 Receiver
- 1 Extron MTP T 15HD A CAT 5 Transmitter
- 6 Sennheiser G300 Radio Mics
- 1 Iport iw4 iPod Dock
- 2 Sanyo PLV80L Projector
- 2 Draper Revelation B Projector Lift/Mirror
- 2 Draper Access V Recessed Widescreen 3m
- 1 Mid Atlantic SRSR2-12 Rack
- 12 TE Electronics Laptop Connection Points
- 2 Extron Crosspoint 128 Matrix Switcher
- 2 Extron Crosspoint 88 Matrix Switcher
- 4 NXD435 Touch-panel
- 8 A-PS-POE-AF AMX POE Injector
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- 2 Mid Atlantic SRSR2-20 Rack

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