

The Plex - South Carolina Megatainment Center

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They saw the light, and it was good

PRODUCTS INVOLVED

LightJockey 2™

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

It is truly the dawning of a new era for one club owner in Charleston, South Carolina. Joe Meli, the owner of "The Plex", was originally a successful building contractor when he and a friend named Mike Russo decided to start throwing outdoor concerts.

In 1991 they brought in Reba Macintyre to perform for one of their outdoor concerts. This production was a challenge for them, as were others, due to the threat of unpredictable weather in the US South. Thus, they made the decision to locate a venue for more consistent events.

Desperado's is born

In 1992 an old Service Merchandise building was pointed out as a possible site for their venue; 90 days later "Desperado's" premiered. The club was Charleston's biggest nightclub for eight years, and received the nightclub of the year award in 1998. Desperado's concert stage was host to some of the country's biggest names in the industry, such as The Ramones, Travis Tritt, The Dixie Chiks, Traffic, and even Andrew Dice Clay.

Conventional lights and electric bills

For their lighting needs, they used over 100 conventional lights which generated a significant portion to their over \$4,000 a month electric bill. In addition to their outrageous electric bill they had to install an extra air-conditioning unit to compensate for the added heat generated by these lighting fixtures; not to mention the constant cost of replacement bulbs. This is where Production Design Associates came into the picture.

PDA suggests Martin

PDA suggested replacement of the conventional's with Martin RoboColor Pro III's. This offered a solution to the enormous expense Desperado's had been dealing with. Within the first month they found that they paid \$2,000 less on their electric bill and had better quality lighting all together. Where there had once been very limited colors, there was now the possibility of up to 12 colors per fixture plus a strobe effect. The lighting enhancement gave the club a much more exciting and updated look and thus attracted the interest of more club-goers.

The Plex concept is born

Then, in 2000, the lease to the building was lost. Joe Meli wasn't ready to stop there; he once again started searching for possible venues. Joe found an old movie theatre that inspired him and 6 months later "The Plex" concept was born.

"The Plex" is a Megatainment Center that is currently in phase one. Phase one is the recent opening of "Neon Moon", a High-Energy Country Bar, which blends modern Country music with dance music. For this project Joe, along with Mike Hallacy, contacted PDA for their lighting design and purchase needs. Changing times in the music industry required more than a little splash of color from a disco ball, and the crowds generate more often in areas where there were active color changes as well as varied lighting schemes and patterns. Joe and Mike knew that if they went with the Martin line through PDA that they not only would receive "a quality product, but also would have the quality and convenience of PDA's customer service and knowledgeable staff."

Concert and dance floor lighting

The dilemma that Jeff Nickles (President of PDA) discovered was that they needed lighting that would serve both for dance floor entertainment as well as concert stage events. PDA suggested they use 5 PAL 1200s (for its unique framing ability and to cover wide areas of wall space with projections of color and rotating patterns), 24 RoboColor IIIs (to wash the dance floor and surrounding areas with color), 6 MAC 300s (to back-light the bands as well as a wash for the dance floor), 6 RoboScan 812s, and the VERY user friendly LightJockey system with a direct access touch panel. Michael Bailey, Neon Moon's LD, was able to facilitate the LightJockey system in under 8 hours of being introduced to it. Additional conventional lighting fixtures are also used.

If you ask Joe Meli what his ultimate goal is in this industry is; he will tell you "to have the number one Country Bar in the country". If you ask Jeff Nickles what his goal in this industry is; he will tell you "to have a successful company that offers the highest quality equipment and customer service that is founded by building long-lasting professional relationships with clients". With quality product lines like Martin Professional serving as a strong foundation; these goals may very well be well on the horizon.

INFORMATION

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