

business trends



With Pleasure

BARS, CLUBS, RESTAURANTS, AND HOTELS ARE WILLING TO PAY FOR RED-CARPET AV

In a bad economy, bars tend to do well; they're places to escape. And many clients are trying to draw in customers by improving their venues, said Jonathan Joyce, partner, with Jak Daragjati, JD Systems of Staten Island, N.Y. "The newer venues are ultra-lounges, a mix of the bar/club/lounge environment, with a lower music volume than a nightclub. Sports bars are also exploding, and with immersive tech, everyone wants to be connected to the outside world."

Owners of established restaurants and bars have realized the need to update, he said. "We're seeing a 50/50 split in our business between new construction and remodeling projects, which are often close to new construction because of extensive revamping."

Bars and restaurants no longer want to be pigeonholed as just a sports bar or a club catering to 20-somethings; they're trying to be meeting places for a variety of customers, observed Rod Andrewson, manager of engineering for CCS Presentation Systems of Scottsdale, AZ. "[Clients want] more flexibility in managing spaces such as in projects that allow the audio source to be appropriate for the customer, i.e., with wireless on tables, so customers can select what they want to hear and see."

Andrewson also noted a move away from a low-dollar mentality. "For instance, one CCS client, a national chain of bars and grills, has chosen to open new locations based on the local clientele, and they want more of these private zoned areas. In this economy, they're concerned with creating an environment to capture a larger market share. The desire for that zone-specific flexibility creates the need for more complicated systems for us to design and install."

CCS is currently engaged in projects for four casinos, Andrewson said. "They have the same requirements as other hospitality



Since opening in 1981, the Blue Note in New York City has become one of the premier jazz clubs in the world. Recently the club received an upgraded SLI Audio sound system driven by Yamaha TX2n amps and installed by Amit Peleg (pictured) of Peletrix. The Blue Note bought one of the first five Yamaha MxCL digital consoles in the U.S. and upgraded with a new MxCL integrated with Yamaha's StageIt in iPad app.

Know Your Rights

The iPod has become synonymous with background music in the hospitality sector. But what complications around music rights and operating systems arise when a bar, club, or restaurant wants to use an iPod as a source?

The source of music is immaterial so far as ASCAP/BMI is concerned, said Per Forsberg of Audio Architects in Chippewa Falls, WI. "If you play it for commercial purposes, you need to pay royalties. I don't think it is up to the AV contractor/integrator to encourage or discourage any particular practice, but I make a practice of explaining the law as I understand it."

If a client doesn't want to subscribe to a service that pays the royalties for them (in addition to providing other services) Forsberg advises them to apply for a blanket license. "This is what the local university does because they have myriad public performances of live and recorded music all over campus on a daily basis. It is also what our church does now that we've initiated contemporary worship services. We use all sorts of different media clips from many sources, and we stay completely legal by paying a nominal fee every year."

—K.M.

clients; they want their customers to feel comfortable no matter what their interest. They're looking for quality. Four years ago, casino clients were not concerned with high-end commercial flat panels. Now, they want value in higher-end, higher-performing products. They're looking at lower revenues, and they want to recapture revenue from the support and maintenance end, as well as from the customer base."

Interactive digital signage is making a serious push into this market, said Orin Knopp, president of Presentation Products in New York, NY. "Digital signage allows the owner/operator to distribute and control the flow of information to their patrons," he said. "Social media is quickly becoming a tool that is included in many interactive systems. Users can 'check-in' to a location via Facebook, Foursquare, or Twitter through interactive digital signage terminals or portals."

In-room technology is also important in hotels. "Today's hotel guests check in with all their personal electronics," Knopp added. "Guests want to watch their own TV shows and movies, play their own games, and listen to their own music all through the in-room entertainment system. They want easy access to power and internet."

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