



CIELO

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Cielo, which finds its home in the uber-chic Meat Packing district of New York, remains the benchmark for small boutique nightclubs around the world. The man behind the legendary nightclub, internationally renowned house DJ Nicolas Matar, has been DJ-ing since he was just 15-years-old and it is his love of music that has remained the driving force behind the club and its success.

Featured in *mondo*dr* (issue 13.4) in 2003, ever since Cielo first opened its doors, the nightclub has taken a different approach to the multitude of venues that line the streets of New York City and are 'of the moment'. With a capacity of just 300, it is an intimate space molded on the old school disco design with a centrally located dancefloor, seating around the perimeter and a disco ball. Its offering is unpretentious, real, all encompassing and above all else, about the music.

"We've had a music driven program since day one and this has allowed us to have longevity in the market," Nicolas told *mondo*dr*. "Cielo is a club that anyone can come to, we are inclusive of music lovers from all walks of life. There is no door policy, no bottle service - we are about the music. There is no longevity in the clubs that are all about celebrity status, their audience isn't loyal - they go there for a year and then move on to 'the next big thing'. We chose a completely different path from the outset, a path, which in the beginning wasn't as lucrative, but a path that has enabled us to build a consistent

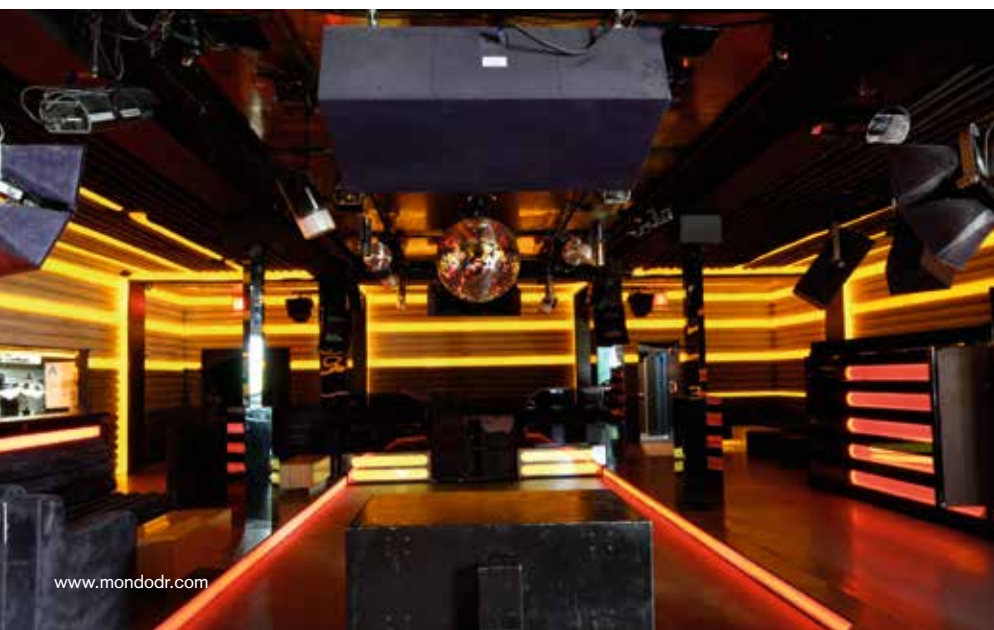
brand over time and we are still here 10 years later - we are constantly reinventing ourselves but always with a focus on EDM." While Cielo has constantly been worked on over the past 10 years, with the audio system tweaked as and when necessary, to coincide with its anniversary celebrations Nicolas has invested in two new Funktion One F315 loudspeakers working with Dan Agne and his team at Sound Investment on the installation. "Every year we tweak the club and the audio system but we did a pretty significant redesign for the anniversary," said Nicolas. "The bar is completely new and the dancefloor has been changed from two steps down to one, which sounds like a small change but for a room this size there wasn't really the need for two steps and this change has worked really well for us as the dancefloor seems bigger. It has also been raised and built up to the first step and we've changed the structural pillars - they are now slimmer and have a different finish, which enhances the lines of sight in the room, and the DJ booth is also different."

"The Funktion One F315's have changed the environment in Cielo tremendously," said Dan. "It was awe-inspiring - they brought an entirely new element to the system, we have so much mid bass now." As well as DJs, Cielo often has live acts performing, this used to need a stage to be brought into the venue, but as part of the redesign an elevated section has been built into the club, which acts as a stage when needed, a platform for patrons to hang out on, or on occasion a small VIP area if someone wants to hire it out as a private area.

Nicolas' relationship with Dan and Funktion One dates back to Cielo's beginnings, as Dan explained: "Nicolas came to me early on in my relationship with Funktion One as he intended to do something with Cielo that was out of the ordinary and on another level and he was seeking something unknown in the industry that was using cutting edge technology. In the beginning he took some convincing that Funktion One was the system for him and we would go back and forth for weeks, discussing all the different options.

"At the time, my relationship with Funktion One was in its very early stages and we were looking for something like Cielo to introduce the product into the US market - we benefitted massively from Nicolas' operations."

For Nicolas, his reasons for choosing Funktion One are linked to his relationship with New York and its rich history of nightclub culture, telling *mondo*dr*: "I always felt like the old school sound systems in New York, that date back to the days of Richard Long and Paradise Garage, never had the clarity in the mids and highs that I imagined ▶





existed but hadn't actually ever heard - until Funktion One - which is why I was on a quest to find something outside of the traditional New York system.

"The kind of music I've always played as a DJ has always been very deep musical stuff that has a lot of nuances and little sounds, and I feel like they get lost on sound systems that don't have the clarity and are just a lot of bass. That's why Funktion One was a match made in heaven for Cielo."

As well as the Funktion One F315's, Cielo's main PA system is based around four Funktion One AX-88 loudspeakers that look after the mid-highs and four Funktion One 218 Mk2 18-inch infra bass enclosures, all of which are powered by one MC² Audio T2000 amplifier, one MC² Audio T3500 amplifier and three MC² Audio E90 amplifiers. For the surround sound four Funktion One Resolution 2 loudspeakers are used, powered by one MC² Audio T2000 amplifier. A further two Funktion One Resolution 2's are used for DJ monitors, along with one Funktion One MB212 subwoofer - one MC² Audio T1500 amplifier and two MC² Audio T2000 amplifiers power these and all processing is carried out by two XTA 448 processors.

Considering Cielo is such an intimate club space, when you step into the venue there appears to be a lot going on audio wise, Nicolas explained: "We wanted to focus all of the energy and sound on the dancefloor because one of the things people have said time and time again, is that at Cielo, when you're sitting around the perimeter of the club you can actually have a conversation, but the moment you step onto the dancefloor it's like another world."

"This was Nicolas' direction when we were developing the system," added Dan. "He wanted the dancefloor to be enveloping and with no lack of energy or experience."

As already mentioned, Nicolas' passion for music and background

in DJ-ing is what really sets Cielo apart from the other nightclubs in New York. "It's like when you have a chef open a restaurant," said Nicolas. "You don't often get DJs opening nightclubs for whatever reason but you can tell when a DJ has been involved, it's the little details such as the height of the console and so on that count.

"A lot of the time you have people involved in a project that know very little about sound and then you end up with a designer involved and the next thing you know all the decisions are being made for aesthetic reasons."

This has never been an issue at Cielo as it was purpose-built and Nicolas knew what he wanted and the design consisted of six-inch foam tubes which have been covered in synthetic suede to make it acoustically pleasing.

One of the elements that sets Cielo apart is that the driving force of the club was to have a room built around what would be a purpose-built dance club that would allow for loudspeakers to be placed where they need to be to achieve great sound. This, according to Dan, was a big luxury. ▶

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

SOUND

4 x Funktion One AX-88 loudspeaker; 2 x Funktion One F315 loudspeaker; 4 x Funktion One 218 sub bass; 6 x Funktion One Resolution 2 loudspeaker; 1 x Funktion One MB212 subwoofer; 4 x MC² Audio T2000 amplifier; 1 x MC² Audio T3500 amplifier; 3 x MC² Audio E90 amplifier; 1 x MC² Audio T-1500 amplifier; 2 x XTA 448 processor

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