

## By Definition, a multi-Funktional venue

What have Charles Darwin,  
Michael Palin, Michael Heseltine  
and The Buttermarket got in  
common? Yes, that's right, they  
all hail from Shrewsbury.  
However, only one of these has  
recently received a major  
facelift. Still guessing? OK, it's  
The Buttermarket - and it's a big  
one, writes Paul Watson . . .

UK - After receiving a sizeable £2 million refurbishment investment, The Buttermarket is now not only Shropshire's largest entertainment venue, but surely its best. Its 180-year-old walls now house what is believed to be Europe's most powerful laser show as well as two state-of-the-art audio and lighting setups spread across its three floors, thanks to some clever work from Basingstoke-based installation company, Definition Group.

Headed up by managing director, Adam Hornblow, who is an audiophile-cum-DJ-cum-lighting expert, the company has evolved quite dramatically since he and two friends decided to have a go at putting nightclubs on the road.

"It was 1998, and I came up with the name Definition, which I initially applied to my mobile nightclub business," he explains. "We could accommodate 1,200 people and we had four Turbosound Floodlights with a load of double-21" bass all along the back wall - this was when Tony Andrews was still there, of course. That gave me the bug, basically."

Indeed. Today, Definition Group (which has officially been running since 2004) offers a full one-stop-shop installation service, incorporating audio, lighting, lasers and effects; and that, it seems, is what appealed to The Buttermarket.

"When I went to see the place, they told me they had already received quotes for sound, and just wanted me to quote on the lighting," Hornblow says, "but when I saw the cavernous layout and

the brick floors and walls, I realised that some serious thinking would need to be done before any audio solution could be installed, so I told them I wanted to do it in its entirety."

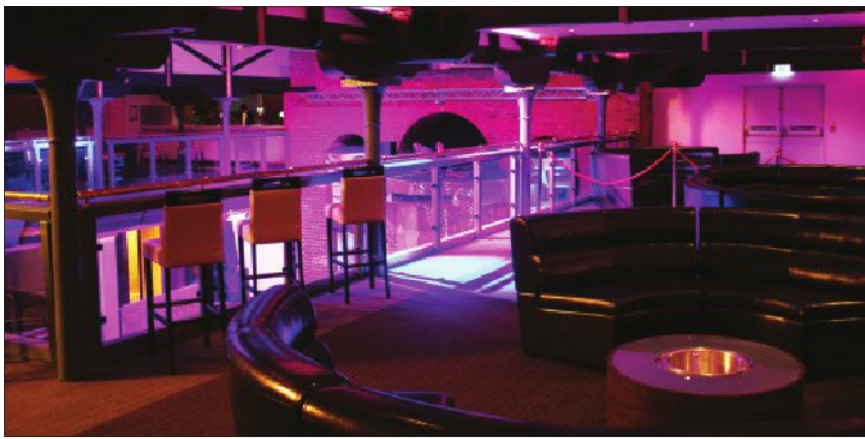
The venue agreed, and Hornblow and his team embarked on the unnering task of making this 600-capacity network of tunnels - otherwise known as 'The Cellars' - sound good. Enter Funktion-One.

"Since the Turbosound days, I have been an advocate of anything Tony Andrews puts his name to, and for me, you can't beat Funktion-One," he insists. "I don't believe in the principles of putting in a speaker that you then set up a particular EQ for; as Tony would say: 'We prefer to design the speaker right in the first place' - and their speakers sound absolutely perfect when they're flat."

As this room was intended for DJs and live bands, Definition decided to deploy six Resolutions 2s as the mains, two Resolution 2 SH for mid/high coverage, a couple of F221 subs, and F55s for the bar and the VIP areas.

"You don't need any more than two subs in that room, believe me," Hornblow smiles. "As you move from the stage back to the bar, it goes from really intense, to intense, to a bit less intense, to about half the volume, which actually works perfectly."

On the visual side, 1,420 FlexDOT RGB LED fixtures from Martin Professional turn the ceiling into a pixel-mapped low-res video screen, with content fed from a Martin Maxedia system. Hornblow favours the FlexDOTs not only for their



discretion, but for their versatility. "They do a lot of underground-type gigs here so they like it dark and moody - although these fixtures are also way bright enough for any application."

Spec'ing the split-level 1,800-capacity Main Arena was a whole other ball game, Hornblow explains, and was completed very recently. This required two Funktion-One DS4 Dance Stacks, two Res 4s, and two F218s. "Initially, we wanted the Dance Stacks at the front of the stage, but in nightclub mode it was really imposing aesthetically. There was also no room left on the stage, and considering the venue is now accommodating weddings as well, this would have been far too intrusive," he admits. "After some long discussions, we managed to imbed the Dance Stacks into the walls, which not only looks great, but sounds even better."

This, however, posed a much bigger problem: the sound system was now behind the stage. "To conquer that issue we placed a pair of Res 4s and F218s at the front of the stage to cater for anything that's miked up, which prevents any feedback," Hornblow says. "A really good sound engineer could also use the Dance Stacks for anything that's not miked up, or even for monitoring."

For the main level and the balcony level of the Main Arena, F81s were deployed, which Hornblow likes for their tonal balance and warmth. "We put them in on both levels, and all around the balcony we've got absorbing material because there's glass everywhere - we didn't want anything to bounce off the glass, and that does the job really well."

As with the bar and the VIP areas, amplification is from MC2 Audio Ti Series amplifiers.

When it comes to DJ nights, all of the kit is linked together, which, Hornblow insists, sounds "mind-blowingly good". And staying on that note, he then gestures towards the circular lighting rig, which is on four Cat A chain hoists, allowing it to swivel, tilt, or move up and down. Are you sure we're in Shrewsbury?

"The most important thing in lighting design is symmetry, and circles have infinite lines of symmetry, hence the 6-metre circle of truss with even, divisible numbers of all lights," he enthuses. I nod, of course. "On there we've got Martin MAC Auras which you can use for the stage stuff, MAC 350s, LED PAR 56 cans for the dance floor, and UV cans as well. Eight of each - it's my circle of equal everything!"

I'll have to remember that one. And if you really want to get Hornblow excited, ask him about his lasers. Trust me. "We believe [the Definition Pro II system, which is custom-built by Laser Electronics Ltd] is the biggest laser system in Europe in terms of output," he beams. "We've got four green, four red, four blue, then eight more individual green diode lasers, which means rather than having a beam table when you're using divider optics and lose the brightness, you maintain *all* the brightness, because every beam is driven by a completely independent laser. I have to say, I'm so proud of this whole installation."

And so he should be - it's phenomenal.

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