

# Building a reputation

It has been a busy Ramadan for Funktion One distributor and installer Em-Tec. The company has equipped five clubs, bars and restaurants in Dubai with the manufacturer's speakers. **James Ling** reports

## THE RAMADAN REFIT HAS BECOME

something of a tradition. As venues close for the month, they take the opportunity to make changes and improvements giving installation companies across the region a good deal of business. This year has been no different, and a number of brands and installers are reporting a busy period with multiple refits.

Taking its place on this list is Em-Tec, the Dubai-based distributor and installer of Funktion One. During this period the company has fitted out five venues in Dubai, each of them joining a growing list of sites that rely on the manufacturer's equipment. 'Ramadan is a very busy period, because a lot of projects open after it,' says Em-Tec CEO Alex Bracken. 'A lot of these places are realising that they are not quite up to spec with their sound systems.'

According to the CEO, the success of the brand during this period and the growing number of sites where it can be found is due to quality and word of mouth. 'People are being blown away by how good the systems sound,' he enthuses. 'More and more venues want to have the boxes because they are doing such a good job elsewhere.'

A good example of this can be found at the Le Meridien Hotel



Alex Bracken and Andrew Williams at Horizon

had been having. It was a month-long project with the acoustic treatment providing the main challenge. The system in the bar consists of two 101s, two Res 1s, a double 18 sub,

four powered Res 2s, and an E45 amplifier driving the double 21 under the stage. Further to this there are two F88s as fill as you come into the club area powered by an E15 and an E25 driving the monitors, as well as X04 and X02 processors to handle the crossovers.

'This system is fantastic compared to what we had,' says assistant F&B manager at the site Mahesh Ramanayaka. 'We've had very good feedback from our customers. It has everything,' he continues. 'In fact we have big plans to put some more everywhere. We want the same system in all our outlets.'

The Ramadan part of the project was the first phase and eventually the existing system both upstairs and down at the venue will be replaced entirely by Funktion One.

This factor of repeat business is something that is certainly driving the company at the moment. 'We are getting hotel bars as an initial project, then they are so impressed they are coming back for more systems in other areas,' says Mr Bracken.

The repeat business aspect can also be found at a third of Em-Tec's Ramadan projects. The One Up bar at Boutique 7 has been equipped with a system that can best be described as small but powerful. The system, designed for live music, consists of an F218 bass unit, two 101 speakers and a pair of 81s in the main bar area driven by an F60

amp. In the second room there is a pair of F81s driven by an F40 and four more F81s in the main sports bar, again powered by an F40 amp.

The solution in this venue so impressed the hotel management, that it decided to stay with the brand when designing a new large club at the hotel. Named B2, the new club is still in the planning process. But one thing that has certainly been decided is the sound system. 'I did lots of research for the first system, but for the club I did not need to check other systems. I only wanted Funktion One,' says the hotel's general manager Vyas Jayabhanu. 'Sound makes a place. We chose Funktion One because they came and designed a system based on the place, not giving us a system and making us design the place according to the system,' he continues. 'Funktion One will be a force to be reckoned with in Dubai.'

Mr Jayabhanu is clearly a satisfied customer and is planning to use the brand again in his other sites. 'We don't have a lot of time here, so when you find something that you know does the job well you stick with it,' he explained.

Another venue equipped over Ramadan, but yet to open, is a new bar and restaurant owned by Mr Bracken called, The Stables. While the venue itself is currently being fitted out, one aspect that has already gone in is the Funktion One sound system.

Split over two levels and with a horseracing theme, the venue will benefit from a system mainly for low-level music and supporting acoustic acts. The Stables features two Res 1.5 cabinets supported by four F55s, two F101s and a double 12 sub for low end, power again comes from F60 and F40 amps. The Res 1.5s are movable so they can be taken

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In Garhoud. The site had the first Funktion One system in Dubai at the Alpha Club. While this venue has now closed, neighbouring facilities have also adopted the brand after hearing it in Alpha. During Ramadan, both Jules Bar and Warehouse installed Funktion One systems.

At Jules, the system is primarily for live music and manager Larry Decena is particularly impressed with the effect it has had on the bar. 'The music coming from the speakers is very clear and very detailed. I'm getting good comments from the guests.'

The bar benefitted from new amps and speakers, both from Funktion One and acoustic treatment to try to tackle the reverberation problems it

F60 and F40 amplifiers and an X04 controller.

With the reverberation issues tackled by the treatment, the bar has been given a new lease of life and according to Mr Decena, the regulars were amazed by how the venue now sounds.

A short walk from Jules across Le Meridien Village is Warehouse. The initial part of this project has seen Em-Tec fully recondition a solution which has been installed to meet the needs of the venue. 'It was the right system for the size of the venue,' says Em-Tec general manager Andrew Williams. 'Otherwise we would have said no and spec'd a different system.'

The system installed includes



One Up has a small but powerful system



The powered Res 2s have been reconditioned for Warehouse



#### An F55 installed at The Stables

upstairs to join the eight F55s and support a band playing there for a party while the lower floor remains as a bar.

The final project from the Ramadan list is arguably the one that could be most associated with Funktion One. While the other four systems are based on the needs of live sound, the install at Horizon is one for a DJ. Situated between two hotel towers at the Habtoor Grand Beach Resort, the open air lounge provides sea views and loud music. The main challenge at this site came from its location between two towers. The system needed to be powerful on the dance floor yet not disturb other hotel guests.

a busy time for Em-Tec. 'The work schedule, particularly during Ramadan has to be to the nail,' reflects Mr Bracken. 'Everyone opens on the same day after Ramadan, so you just have to manage it as best you can. Putting all the procedures in place for the crew, getting the timings right and working nightshifts, it's all important,' he continues. 'Obviously a lot of work gets done during Ramadan, but we've also got a lot of work coming up into the New Year. It's nice not to be constantly looking for the next job and being able to plan ones that are coming up.'

Encouraging signs like this point to a busy future for the distributor and its brand in the region. With these



#### Acoustic treatment and Res 1 cabinets was the option for Jules

Mr Williams describes the project as the easiest of all the installs Em-Tec did during Ramadan. It was a job based on positioning the speakers and getting the correct dispersion angles to keep the sound away from the towers. The lounge features four Res 1s and a double 12 sub as well as monitors for the DJ. It was the dispersion angle of the Res 1 that was the main factor in installing these cabinets and it has proven advantageous as since the new system was switched on there have been no noise complaints from the rooms.

With five large projects to complete in a short window, Ramadan was

projects Em-Tec has shown not only that Funktion One is about far more than just electronic music, it has also proved that the brand is appropriate for more venues than just large clubs.

Ramadan is certainly a busy period for a number of installers and distributors. But as the dust settles on this period and the new systems get switched on, the investment in quality is always highlighted and the business it provides to local companies cannot be underestimated.

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