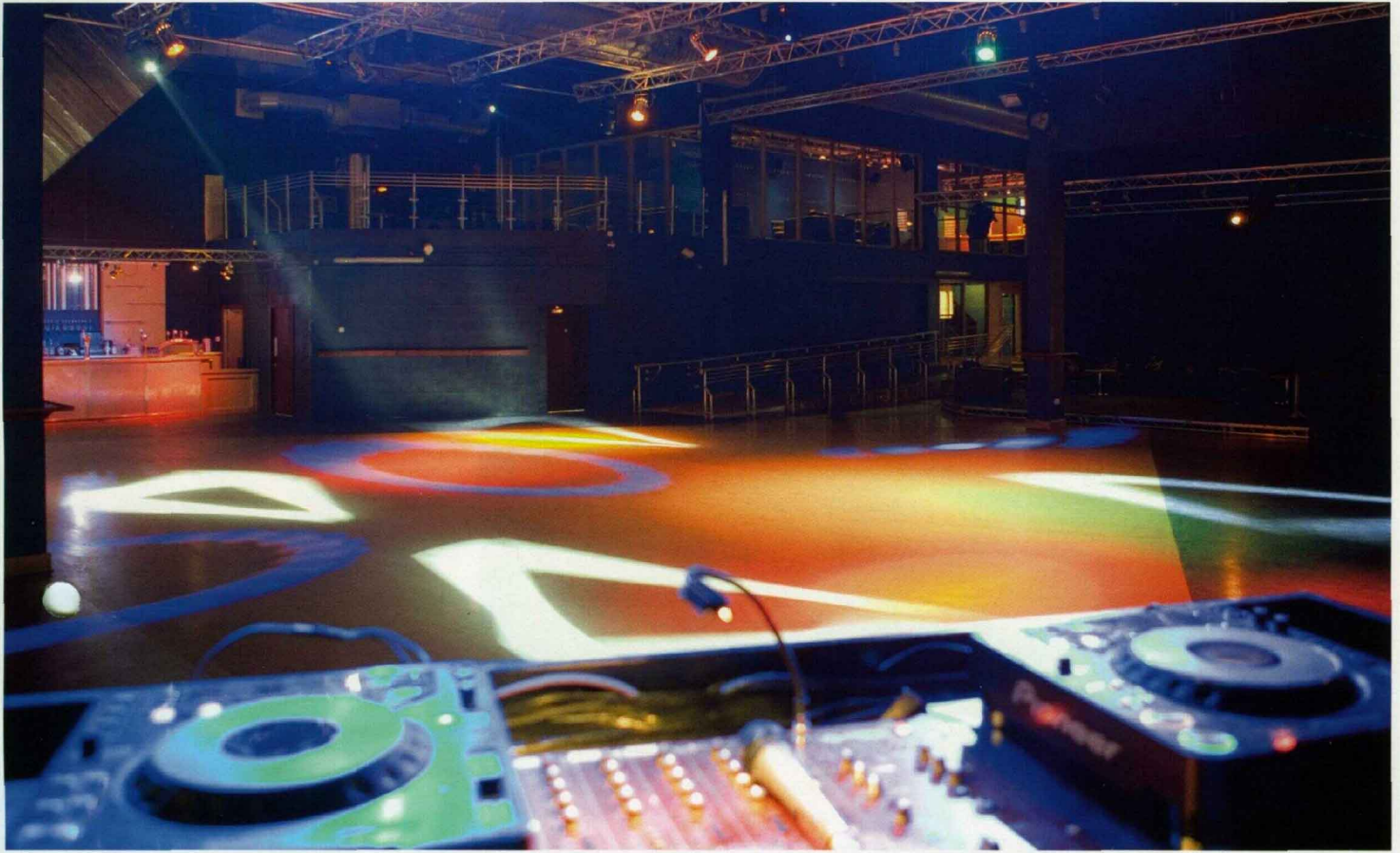


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VENUE REVIEW



LOCATION: CASTLEFORD VENUE TYPE: NIGHTCLUB, LIVE VENUE, CONFERENCE CENTRE

## Xsite Arena

Annexe Leisure take on a multi-function venue in their second venture

**S**ituated in the heart of the Xscape leisure complex in Castleford, Lincoln operators Annexe Leisure, Litestructures and TMC have taken over a live venue, club and conference space called Xsite. The chain of Xscape units, which include sites in Milton Keynes and Braehead in Glasgow, have proven themselves high turnover ventures since their launch in 2000, and feature real-snow ski slopes as well as cinemas, mainstream restaurants and shopping all compactly knitted to the building's striking architecture. They are a natural site for a nightclub venue and accordingly Xsite has been slotted into the large empty wedge created beneath the ski slope at Castleford.

Originally a live venue, Annexe Leisure MD Phil Cavalier-Lumley has decided to adapt Xsite to cater for large scale corporate events as well as three club nights over the weekend. As such, the venue's trading nights have been increased from three to seven, offering client companies a perfect conference hall with nearby entertainments and catering on hand, including a TGI Fridays, Nando's, and the Loft bar and club.

To accommodate the three different activities, the club has been designed to be as flexible as possible. The 1,800 capacity main room has two bars and a mezzanine drinking area with a bar and viewing gallery below the enormous ventilation system. There is little fixed seating or lighting in the main room. Instead, designers Easy Design Solutions and touring production company Litestructures have created a highly flexible interior out of Litestructures' range of touring stages and trussing, while audio specialists TMC have provided a comprehensive Funktion One audio solution. The many pieces of portable stage can be shifted around the room, or used to create different drinking areas, while from a grid of trusses various intelligent lighting fixtures can be hung or swapped around as the event requires. The result is a venue which can be easily changed from blank canvas into a concert hall or club on a daily basis.

"Clubbing is going to be our bread and butter," says Phil. "But we want to make use of the space as a live venue and function room, accommodating corporate events, trade shows, product launches

and fabulous aftershow parties for local events. The Xscape complex has done really well in terms of attracting corporate partners to hold their major events here, and Xsite will continue to play a major role in this respect.

"The venue has been given as simple a design as possible to make it useable by outside promoters. We're in talks with some of the best promoters in the UK. Our weekend club nights are getting recognition amongst the locals, and we've done really well in the period since our opening. As ever, though, novelty has a brief shelf-life, so we're looking to outside promoters to come in and sustain the momentum. While we're biding our time to find the right people, our set up and audio installation will provide the bare bones for any good promoter to make the club their own."

Rather than try to hide the functional practicalities of this set up, the designers have successfully integrated Litestructures' aluminium trusses into the feel of the venue. The result is a highly industrial looking club with an authentic warehouse feel. This identity is helped ably

VENUE REVIEW



by the front of house **Funktion One** system of eight Res 4s, eight F218 subs and 2 F218 Infrabass units, each powered by MC2 amps, installed by contracting and touring specialists TMC. The sound is carried to the bar and peripheral areas using Logic System IS12s hung from the **Litestructures** rig and evened out using a Cloud zone management system.

"The aim of install was to cater for both the dance and live acts," says Miles Marsden at TMC. "The **Funktion One** systems are being used more and more by live groups: the Kaiser Chiefs and Zutons used **Funktion One** on tour last year, and the kit obviously has key clubbing installations in **Ibiza**. I don't think it'll be long before we start seeing them in theatres."

Early success will allowed the operators to develop the venue further. Touches of sophistication

will flesh out the bare-bones set up: luxury seating and lavish draping is being proposed for the **VIP** mezzanine, while further draping will be used to partition the venue or reduce its capacity for intimate occasions. A nother bar has also been mooted, with each of the three existing bars due a major refit to incorporate LED back bar illumination from **Lighting Effects Distribution** to replace the current lighting arrangements - parcans hung from a **Litcstructures** rig

"There are likely to be some refinements in the coming months," says designer Graham Taylor of **Easy Design Solutions**. "B ut the core venue is there: an infinitely flexible venue that can cater for anyone's needs and be transformed easily by any promoter. It's the kind of place which would attract a visionary promoter to kick off something really special." ■

VITAL STATISTICS

**Xsite Arena**  
 Unit 28  
 Xscape  
 Colorado Way  
 Castleford  
 WF10 4TA  
 Tel: 01977 603 920  
 Owner: Annexe Leisure Ltd

Hours  
 Thur 10pm-2am // Fri-Sat 10pm-3am

Key Contractors  
 Interior Designer: **Easy Design Solutions** // Lighting & **Sound** Installation: **TMC** // Flooring: **Novern Flooring** // Entry **Systems**: **Q-Systems** // **EPoS**: **Cash Control Services**

Drinks  
 Pouring brands: **Jim Beam** whisky, **Gordon's** gin, **Bacardi** rum, **Smirnoff** vodka // Premium draught lager: £2.80 (**Grolsch**; pint) // Standard draught lager: £2.60 (**Fosters**; pint) // Lead PPL: £ 2.60 (**Corona**) // Lead PPS: £3.50 (**Smirnoff Ice**) // **Cocktail** list: No

Technology  
 Sound System: 8 x **Funktion One Res 4s**, 8 x **Funktion One F218** bass speakers, 2 x **Funktion One F218 Infrabass** units, 4 x **Funktion One F88** speakers, 4 x **MC2 T1500** and **T500 Amps**, 2 x **MC2 T2000 Amps**, 2 x **MC2 E45 Amps**, 8 x **Logic Systems IS 12s**// Stage Rig: **D&B** stage monit item, 1 x **Shure UHF-RHH** radio system, 1 x **Klotz Stage system** // Sound Control: 1 x **XTA DP6i** speaker management system, 1 x **Digico D1** mixing desk, **XTA** procesing, **Cloudzone** system // Lighting Control: **ShowCAD Show Controller**



e-series

 <p><b>Output power per channel</b>              8 ohms @ 1 kHz 750W (900W peak)              4 ohms @ 1 kHz 750W (900W peak)</p> <p><b>Weight</b>              10.25 kgs</p>	 <p><b>Output power per channel</b>              4 ohms @ 1 kHz 1250W              2 ohms @ 1 kHz 2200W (2500W peak)</p> <p><b>Weight</b>              10.25 kgs</p>
 <p><b>Output power per channel</b>              4 ohms @ 1 kHz 2250W              2 ohms @ 1 kHz 3200W (4500W peak)</p> <p><b>Weight</b>              11 kgs</p>	 <p><b>Output power per channel</b>              4 ohms &amp; 1 kHz 750W              2 ohms &amp; 1 kHz 1400W (1500W peak)</p> <p><b>Weight</b>              9 kgs</p>

All MC2 products carry a 5-year warranty

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