

Martin Audio ADORN for McConnell's Distillery



When Belfast Distillery Company set out to preserve the legacy of McConnell's Irish Whisky - a brand that dates back to 1776 - they decided to take over the A-Wing of Crumlin Road Gaol, and convert it into a visitor attraction to run alongside its production activities. Built in 1845, the Gaol was renowned for housing a number of key figures during The Troubles, but this listed building has now been carefully restored and converted, with a state-of-the-art AV installation - including end-to-end Martin Audio loudspeakers, designed and specified by the manufacturer's partner for over 40 years, Rea Sound. Martin Audio had in fact been requested by the clients themselves ... notably their Master Distiller & Head of Supply & Operations, Graeme Millar. According to Rea Sound director, Roger McMullan, as a gigging musician, Millar had fallen in love with Martin Audio's sound when purchasing a first-generation Blackline band PA many years ago.

It had been McMullan himself who was confronted with the challenge of specifying a workable system within a difficult space, to enable guided tours to take place that uncover the unique history of this iconic Belfast distillery brand in a landmark setting. He recalled the origins of the contract in August last year. "At the time it was a building site as they had taken out the floors and removed the roof to get

their distilling tanks in," he said. "It was obvious to me we should use a combination of Martin Audio CDD6 and ADORN A55 for the speakers, so we drew up a specification and were immediately given the go-ahead. We then had many long meetings debating how we would make this work."

As many as eight different tour groups can traverse the building at a time. After signing in at Reception, where announcements are made and BGM played out through eight ADORN A55, visitors are led on a mazy route by a tour guide - via The Board Room, Mash Room, Tasting & Maturation Room and Experiential Room, finishing at the Bar & Atrium on the top floor of the three-storey edifice. Here they can stand on the glass door and enjoy views straight down over the Reception area two floors below.



In the client's own board room, the only space not open to the general public, there are a further four ADORN A55 ... part of a total complement of 36 of these products. "We selected ADORN for its compact size and value for money ... the quality of the sound is exceptional for the price," stated McMullan. "We've used it a lot for infills and foyers in the past, but this is the first time we've really used it in anger."

All supplied in white, their compact footprint means they can be discreetly tucked away into the furnishings or equally be wall mounted. The tour itself initially takes visitors into The Board Room that does have public access, and here they are

treated to a Pepper's Ghost introductory video presentation. In order to enhance the presence and realism of the playback video, a Martin Audio SX110 subwoofer has been added.

As the tour guide enters each room, the Audio Technica mic is reactivated via the dedicated remote wall panel where a separate system also caters for the hard of hearing. The single pair of Martin Audio CDD6s can be found in the Bar area - which marks the end of the tour, and is effectively six former gaol cells combined together. The idea of specifying the more powerful CDDs is with the future idea of promoting live bands in mind. "They will also host special evenings for corporate clients, who can plug in their own mixing desk - so they wanted a bit more quality and coverage," continues Roger McMullan.

All the loudspeakers are assigned to three of Martin Audio's VIA2004 amplifiers, which power the entire system, while processing is under the command of an Allen & Heath AHM. In conclusion, Roger McMullan can reflect on a contract that he describes as one of the most prestigious in the company's long history. Graeme Millar reciprocated by saying that working with Rea Sound had made the installation extremely easy. "The depth of knowledge and experience has brought together a great overall system for us," he said. "The ease of use for us has been important, with the adaptability and reliability surpassing everything we asked for. The custom paging system also makes it easy for our staff to announce easily to the required areas."

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