Martin Audio BlacklineQ for Dead Wax Norwich



Penguin Media Solutions have carried out their second Dead Wax venue installation for Laine Pub Company, following its earlier success in Brighton, where both companies are based. This time they have moved out to East Anglia, converting the former Dog House Bar - which had been temporarily closed - and returning to the successful Martin Audio sound reinforcement formula that had served Brighton so well. Penguin’s inspiring outcome to fit out a bar aimed at lovers of pure vinyl and indie live music alike, has been to merge the manufacturer’s vintage Screen4, originally designed as a three-way cinema system, with its brand new BlacklineQ - this being the speaker’s first deployment. The popular city centre venue was part of the Punch Pubs’ estate - the parent company of Laine - and according to Penguin’s Technical Project Manager Dylan Thompson “was much loved, [with patrons] excited to see the venue back and operating.”

Working closely with Laine’s designer, Rob Hall, Thompson’s specification leant heavily on quirky, mission-critical technology, following a brief “to avoid a black box in each corner”. Instead, in the ground floor bar he specified iconic Screen4 tops “for that big, vintage listening bar look”. Blackline X8s were customised with classic tweed grilles, laser engraved, and colour filled brass Martin Audio badges, providing a nod to a bygone era. While Optimal Audio Sub10s provide the LF response, the DJ is privileged to have the first new Blackline Q8 as his reference sound.

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Of the BlacklineQ itself, Thompson notes, “I first heard it at the Martin Audio Open Day and knew it would be perfect for this. It’s a marked step up from the BlacklineX, with a good coverage pattern. It looks great - like a premium product - sounds great, with loads of punch and a crystal-clear top, and is at an excellent price point. It lends itself to this location because it’s a tall, narrow cabinet so it’s nice and easy to place.”

The two-zone upstairs area is divided by a mezzanine. The main L/R PA for the live area comprises the new Blackline Q12s, flown landscape from a front bar, with a Blackline Q218 mono centre sub and LE100 monitoring. The bar area is equipped with Blackline X8s. Of the subwoofer, Thompson observes, “As it is such a small room, I wanted uniform bass with no corner loading and no boominess. In fact, the Q218 sounds almost too good!” Elsewhere, multiples of Optimal Audio’s compact Cuboid 3TXs provide even sound distribution in the ancillary areas - toilets, stairwell and outdoor area smoking area, where they are equipped with IP kits. The entire set up is powered by a pair of Linea Research 88C06 and a 44C06 multichannel amplifiers.

In summary, Dylan Thompson says the venue has delivered an overwhelming verdict, with queues round the block on the opening night. “It is different from Brighton though still very music-centric and really fits what Norwich is about, with an arts college next door. I thoroughly enjoyed working on this … and it was great

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to work with a client that allowed us to flirt with it!” Rob Hall himself added, “What the system has done is elevate the whole venue and given a flexibility that was not there before. It does lots of things at the same time in a warm and layered way. You can feel the quality at low volume, but at the same time the impact of the venue is epic. It delivers the flexibility and multipurpose solution, with the layers that we wanted.”

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