40 Years of Focusrite

For four decades, Focusrite has been the trusted manufacturer of interfaces and audio products for leading professionals and aspiring creators alike. The company is officially celebrating its 40th anniversary this year with a series of activities honoring its storied past and looking forward. Founded in 1985 by the legendary Rupert Neve, Focusrite was born from a special commission by Beatles producer Sir George Martin that challenged the company to create a world-class recording console for high-end professional studios. Only ten of those original Forte consoles were ever made, but their reputation cemented Focusrite’s place in recording history.

In 1989, leadership passed to industry veteran Phil Dudderidge, currently Chairman and Founder of Focusrite plc, who has guided the brand into a new era of product development for professionals, commercial facilities, content creators and hobbyist

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musicians. Dudderidge's career has spanned nearly six decades since he started out in live sound engineering, famously serving as Led Zeppelin's touring soundman in 1970. He went on to co-found Soundcraft in 1973, helping define modern mixing console design. After the sale of Soundcraft to Harman, Dudderidge acquired the assets of Focusrite in 1989 and transformed it into a leading global audio technology company, building a 40-year legacy of shaping how music is created and experienced.

Expanding the vision beyond consoles, pre's and processors: from Scarlett to global brands
Following Focusrite plc's beginning as a premier brand of coveted high-end mic preamps and analogue processors, including the ISA, Red and Blue ranges, among Focusrite's most notable milestones are:

- 2004: The introduction of the Liquid Channel, a groundbreaking channel strip that blended analogue input stages with digital modelling. 2004 also saw the acquisition of Novation, a leader in keyboards, synthesizers, and controllers, expanding Focusrite's reach into electronic music making.
- 2009: Launch of Novation Launchpad, whose grid controller spawned countless performances and YouTube videos with billions of views.
- 2012: Introduction of the Scarlett range of audio interfaces, which revolutionized the home recording movement and became the world's best-selling audio interface.

Also launched in 2012, Focusrite RedNet quickly established itself as a benchmark in the adoption of Dante®-enabled audio-over-IP networking. Offering pristine converters, robust reliability, and seamless scalability, RedNet systems are now deployed in world-class recording studios, post-production facilities, broadcast centers, and live sound environments worldwide. By enabling high-channel-count audio with ultra-low latency over standard Ethernet, RedNet has transformed professional workflows and continues to be a cornerstone of modern networked audio.

- 2014–2019: Expansion into cross-platform software and successive Scarlett generations, each improving sound quality and accessibility. The company also added respected pro-audio names to its portfolio, including ADAM Audio (studio monitors), Martin Audio (touring and installed loudspeakers), and Optimal Audio (commercial installs).
- 2021–2022: Strategic acquisitions of Sequential, Oberheim, Linea Research and Sonnox, adding legendary synthesizers, advanced DSP/amplification, and award-winning software to the Group's capabilities.
- 2023–2024: Launch of Scarlett Gen 4 and acquisitions of OutBoard Electronics (TiMax immersive sound, rigging control) and Innovate Audio (panLab spatial tools), securing Focusrite Group's leadership in immersive and live sound.

Visit the brand's 40th anniversary timeline here. Today, Focusrite Group

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encompasses 13 industry-leading brands, uniting decades of expertise across studio recording, live sound, software, and immersive audio.

To mark this landmark anniversary, Focusrite hosted an exclusive gathering of artists, producers, engineers, educators, and press on Thursday, September 25, at the Custom House at Guitar Center in Nashville's studio-centric Berry Hill district. The standing room only event featured Southern-style catering, custom Focusrite-inspired cocktails, a photo booth, raffle prizes, a 3D sculpted cake in the shape of the new Scarlett 2i2 Anniversary Edition, and listening sessions in the ADAM Audio and Focusrite immersive audio room.

Focusrite chose Nashville as the location for its U.S. anniversary celebration because of the city's unique role as a global music hub and its thriving community of engineers, producers, educators and musicians. With its blend of historic studios, world-class talent and cutting-edge facilities, Nashville represents both the heritage and the future of recording, making it the ideal setting to honor Focusrite's 40-year legacy while connecting directly with the creators who continue to rely on its technology every day.

Guests were also treated to the unveiling of the Scarlett 2i2 Anniversary Edition - a limited-edition reimagining of the world's most popular audio interface in Focusrite's iconic ISA blue, first seen on the legendary ISA 110 and 130 modules. This special 2-in, 2-out interface combines two remote-controlled mic preamps, Hi-Z instrument/line inputs, and converters from Focusrite's flagship RedNet range. It also features the cleanest preamps ever included in a Scarlett and a re-engineered Air mode for added presence and character.

The Anniversary Edition pays tribute to Focusrite's heritage with its ISA-blue chassis, the historic ff logo, and a hidden schematic tribute beneath the unit inspired by the ISA 110 and Studio Console. Each interface comes packaged in a collector's black-and-gold gift box.

To honor 40 years of partnerships, the Scarlett 2i2 Anniversary Edition also comes bundled with three premium plug-ins in addition to the standard Scarlett software suite:

- Sonnox Voca: All-in-one vocal production toolkit combining smooth compression, rich saturation, and tone-shaping.
- Acustica Audio Rust: Faithful recreation of the EQs that defined the Motown sound.
- Softube Opto Compressor: Classic optical tube compressor emulation for natural warmth and control

As Focusrite celebrates 40 years of innovation, the company remains committed to empowering musicians, producers, engineers, and creators at every level. From its origins in world-class analogue consoles to today's expansive family of brands spanning recording, live sound, and immersive technologies, Focusrite continues to

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shape the sound of music across the globe. With the launch of the Scarlett 2i2 Anniversary Edition and a renewed focus on the future, Focusrite looks ahead to the next chapter of delivering the tools that inspire creativity and drive the art of audio forward.

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