

THE COACHWORKS ASHFORD, KENT

Sonance all-weather speakers and Yamaha Commercial Audio power and processing provide high quality, multi-zone sound for an imaginative new entertainment and dining venue.

The Coachworks at Ashford, Kent, is a new entertainment venue with an inspiring mix of bars, 'street food' catering concessions, event and office spaces. It's designed around several distinct social hubs creating opportunities for live music, weddings, parties, and themed events.

At the centre of the site is 'The Yard', a large outdoor seating area surrounded by 'pop-up' concessions selling artisan food and drink, packaged for younger tastes, and supported by the venue's 'Yard Bar'. 'Boutilliers', for instance, sells craft beverages, while the 'Street Kings' smoke shack offers "an American BBQ fix", and 'California Cravings' dispenses Mexican-American food "handmade with love and fresh ingredients". At present there are five concessions on the site together with a newly built DJ kiosk.

Adjacent to The Yard is a first-floor events hub called 'The Hothouse'. Enclosed on three sides, it's designed to host live music, DJ sets, food markets and exhibitions. Elsewhere, 'The Cornstore' offers shared-space office desks and self-contained studios to local companies and individuals.

The Project

As a focus for streetwise music, art and food culture, The Coachworks needed a multi-zone audio system to further stimulate the atmosphere of enterprise and creativity at the venue, and so turned to local integrator Potters Home Digital for ideas. PHD Director Alex Jones takes up the story.

"We've been providing home entertainment services in the area since 1913, so we've built a reputation for custom design locally, and I guess we were on The Coachworks' radar. "Prior to our involvement they'd been dragging a PA rig to The Yard for event music - not especially elegant or convenient - and obviously too loud for some customers and not loud enough for others. "What's more, the sound quality did not befit the venue's exclusive performance culture. "So, we suggested something appropriate from Sonance. "Clearly the audio quality had to be noticeably superior and consistent across the different spaces - from the open air in The Yard to the more enclosed acoustics of The Hothouse. "We selected Sonance because we knew it had the product range to provide the tools we needed."



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The Installation

“Covering the large area of open space within The Yard, we used multiple Sonance Omni-6T speakers buried in a series of six planters down the centre of the space. “These give us the full-range dispersion and intelligibility that’s perfect for crowded public areas. “Even in this noisy environment the Omnis deliver a noticeably higher sound quality without drowning out conversations, and in multiple deployments they provide consistent 360° audio coverage over a wide area to great effect.”

“For the Hothouse and the new DJ Kiosk we installed Sonance Mariner 86s: a pair for the kiosk and four pairs in The Hothouse. “These are robust, all-weather full-range speakers with an ingenious 180° directable mounting that works perfectly almost everywhere, so the choice was a no-brainer. “And because they can be driven hard with no break-up, they’re ideal as a compact and versatile house PA for live acts and events in exposed environments.

Driving the speakers in both zones is a bulletproof Yamaha Commercial Audio system comprising a MTX5-D Digital Matrix Processor and XMV4280 amplifier, hooked up to a Yamaha MusicCast network for tablet-controlled streaming from online and local music libraries. SCP 14/2 speaker cable is used throughout.

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Hidden in planters at the centre of The Yard, six Sonance Omni speakers deliver consistent full range 360° sound over a wide area



Four pairs of full-range Sonance Mariner 86 all-weather speakers handle the audio at The Hothouse events hub

The Challenges

“Actually,” says Alex, “it was all pretty straightforward during the week we had on site. “The cables to the Omnis and Mariners in The Yard went under the decking and discreetly up the walls to the Mariners in The Hothouse. “The venue already had an equipment room with adequate space and ventilation for the Yamaha system. “In fact, the only concern was security for the Omnis. “Even though they were disguised by the foliage in the planters, we secured them with bracing bolted to the planters, and it would take a pretty determined thief to remove them.”

“I must thank John Perry at Habitech for helping us with the design, particularly involving Yamaha’s commercial audio processing and power elements. “We’ve always enjoyed a close working relationship with Habitech, whose service through product range, supply and support is, in our experience, second to none.”

The Results

“The Coachworks is absolutely delighted with the installation. “We recommended the use of multiple speakers to provide the consistency of high-quality sound they were looking for, and the Sonance elements deliver that. “The staff find the system effortless to use and have commented on the heightened level of audio detail available in each zone, even when the system is driven hard. “As a versatile and durable full-range, multi-zone design, it’s hard to beat.”

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An Omni-concealing planter; one of six





Equipment

Sonance OMNI-6T Pro Series x 6

Sonance Mariner 86 x 5 pairs

Yamaha MTX3 8-way Audio Matrix Processor

Yamaha XMV4280 280W x 4 channel power amplifier

SCP 14/2 speaker cable OFC indoor/outdoor

